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ANNIVERSARY
1941 - 1991

Daily Report

Soviet Union

FBIS-SOV-91-246
Monday
23 December 1991

Daily Report
Soviet Union

FBIS-SOV-91-246 CONTENTS *23 December 1991*

NOTICE TO READERS: An * indicates material not disseminated in electronic form.

NOTICE TO READERS: The United States Government recognizes the independence of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

NOTICE TO READERS: The name of this book will change from the "Soviet Union DAILY REPORT" to the "Central Eurasia DAILY REPORT" with the 6 January 1992 edition. The "Central Eurasia DAILY REPORT" will cover the same geographic area as the "Soviet Union DAILY REPORT."

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Arms Control & Disarmament

Republics Interested in 'Small-Scale SDI'

PM2012133991 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 20 Dec 91 First Edition p 3

[Major M. Pogorelyy report: "Former Soviet Republics Have Become Interested in 'Small-Scale SDI'"]

[Text] Representatives of a number of former Soviet republics are showing more interest than the USSR's central leadership did in the promising American antimissile defense system Global Protection Against Limited Strikes [GPALS], including at the level of collaborating in its creation. H. Cooper, director of the organization for implementing the SDI [strategic defense initiative], stated this. According to him this interest is based on an assessment by Soviet experts of the effectiveness of the use of Patriot missiles for antimissile defense during the war in the Persian Gulf. He noted that on the other hand difficulties of an economic nature may prevent the "Soviets" from carrying out the modernization of their own ABM [anti-ballistic missile] system in the Moscow region, although only a month ago such plans did exist at the Soviet General Staff.

The director of the SDI Organization also reported on several details of the program to develop the defense system against limited missile strikes GPALS, which is also called the "small-scale SDI." So, as soon as 1996 a command post should be created at the Grand Forks Air Force Base in the state of North Dakota. A radar tracking system and up to 100 launchers for land-based antimissile missiles will also be brought into commission within the framework of GPALS at its first stage. It is estimated that the project will cost a minimum of $46 billion.

NATO Doubts Soviet Nuclear Arms Future

PM2312090191 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 20 Dec 91 Union Edition p 1

[A. Sychev article: "Will Baker Manage To Reassure NATO?"]

[Text] Political development in our disintegrating vast country and the fate of the Soviet nuclear arsenal—these are the central topics at the NATO Council's winter session, which has opened in Brussels. The North Atlantic alliance is urgently seeking answers to the many questions posed by the breakup of the USSR. Will J. Baker, who has arrived in Brussels from Kiev, be able to give satisfactory answers to them?

Great doubts beset NATO in connection with the future of almost 30,000 nuclear warheads. At the entrance to NATO headquarters, J. Baker told journalists in passing that he had received "very, very firm assurances" from the Soviet authorities. However, the statement by the president of Kazakhstan that this state does not intend to be in a hurry to destroy its own share of the Soviet nuclear legacy poured oil on the flames of doubts to which the West is prey.

NATO Secretary General M. Woerner is sure that the Soviet nuclear arsenal is now under unified control, but he is not at all sure whether this situation will persist after the official report on the end of the USSR. NATO is also concerned that the young states might encounter difficulties on apportioning the quota which the Soviet Union accepted under the treaty on the reduction of conventional armed forces and arms in Europe.

In general, the entire edifice of European security and cooperation, which has only just started acquiring a real outline, is threatened with destruction. In the opinion of a high-ranking NATO figure, who wished to remain anonymous, "it is impossible to speak of the architecture of security when bricks continue to tumble out of the brickwork and the whole wall is on the point of collapsing."

The events in the Soviet Union are now being discussed at NATO Headquarters. Commentators point out that the U.S. secretary of state, on the basis of what he saw and heard during his visit, will attempt to secure his colleagues' consent to the U.S. proposal to create "tactical forces" which will engage in giving direct humanitarian and technical assistance to the states of the former USSR.

Washington put this idea to NATO several days ago, and no one has discussed it, yet it already has its opponents. France was not slow to come out against giving NATO new tasks not within its guidelines.

We will very soon know the conclusions and possible decisions at which the ministers will arrive—the session will last one day. Obviously, J. Baker's impressions are not the most optimistic, and E. Shevardnadze's latest warning on the approach of serious and undesirable events in the former USSR (putsch, riots...) will still prompt NATO to agree to give us assistance through NATO channels but, as commentators point out, "on tough terms."

The NATO countries' ministers will meet again in the sessions hall 20 December, but this time they will be joined by the foreign ministers of Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. A seat is also provided at the table for a Soviet delegation, which was to have been headed, as proposed, by Union Minister E. Shevardnadze. However, he has decided not to attend the first session of the NATO Cooperation Council in Brussels. His place will be taken by USSR Ambassador to Brussels N. Afanasyevskiy, who will be joined, so people in the bloc's headquarters hope, by representatives of the sovereign republics (in all, together with the USSR—25 states).

The agenda of the meeting, to be held by decision of the NATO countries' heads of state and government, is not known. It will not be wrong to say that the disintegrating Soviet Union will be discussed there as well. According to reports being received, an agreement to hold similar annual meetings of the defense ministers of the 25 European states, the United States, and Canada will also probably be reached at the council session.

But most likely, Western agencies point out, this meeting will be ceremonial in nature.

Article Cites Concerns

PM2312093991 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 20 Dec 91 Union Edition p 5

[S. Guk article: "J. Baker: It Is Clear Now That You Are Not Agreed on Questions of Nuclear Weapons"]

[Text] The winter session of the 16 NATO countries' foreign ministers has opened in Brussels—a nontraditional session, with invitations to colleagues from East European countries. The main, and almost the only, item on the agenda is the fate of the huge nuclear arsenals scattered about the territory of the former USSR.

However, the discussion will take place without the chief "architect of the celebration": Eduard Shevardnadze, who was to have represented our interests, has not arrived in Brussels for perfectly understandable reasons. President Boris Yeltsin announced on the eve of his visit to Italy that he is disbanding the Union Foreign Ministry and Ministry of Internal Affairs, most of whose functions will be assumed by Russia. So the emergent Commonwealth has been left for now without a unified foreign and domestic policy.

Paradoxical though this sounds, our position will be explained by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, who has just visited Moscow and the capitals of four other republics. Up until now the head of the U.S. foreign policy department has not yet publicly expounded his views as to whether the general interrepublic chaos will also affect such a dangerously explosive "matter" as nuclear weapons. He was able to bring back just one totally unambiguous conviction from his trip: There is no unity among the former republics on this question.

Boris Yeltsin has the firm intention of moving all the arsenals to Russia and establishing unified control over them. Nursultan Nazarbayev, the head of Kazakhstan, is agreeable only to joint control over the nuclear weapons in his republic but does not intend to surrender them to anyone (Alma-Ata will not disarm until Moscow does likewise).

Although Leonid Kravchuk has proclaimed himself commander in chief of all the armed forces in the Ukraine, he does not crave control of the nuclear arsenal, nor, evidently, does he wish to hand it over to anyone else; but he is full of intentions to eliminate all stocks of weapons of mass destruction in the republic by the year 2000 (in which the United States will readily help him). A roughly similar position is also held by Belarussian leader Stanislav Shushkevich (the republic will, in time, become a neutral nuclear-free zone).

These, briefly, are the positions of the heads of the new states on whose territory are weapons of mass destruction. And more than enough unclear questions remain. In particular, for example, how many "nuclear briefcases" will be wandering about the former USSR? What fate will befall tactical nuclear weapons? Under conditions of total confusion will they not fall into the hands of some frenzied fanatics? Where are the guarantees that enterprising and unprincipled slick operators will not take advantage of the present troubled times and start up (if they have not done so already) an underground business in sales of murderous technologies to some dictatorial regimes which—you can be certain—will not be put off by the price in this particular case? And with whom is the West to hold talks in the future on continuing the nuclear disarmament process?

It is necessary to look the truth in the eyes: At present the new leaders are more in the grip of a mood of universal share-out and fears of "missing out." The most important thing has somehow imperceptibly taken a back seat behind the clashes of ambitions: Nuclear weapons were created by the entire country and are not the personal property of any one president or several presidents, and haggling is really out of place here. We have already "presented" not only ourselves but also our neighbors on the planet with one Chernobyl. So is it not time we came to our senses before it is too late, and stop constituting an unpredictable tangle of contradictions at least on this question, and stop keeping the whole of the rest of the world on tenterhooks, trying to guess what new "surprises" it has to expect from the leaders of the new emergent Commonwealth?

Outcome of NATO Session

PM2012141591 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 19 Dec 91 First Edition p 3

[Major M. Pogorelyy report: "Perestroyka in NATO Military Structures Starts From the Top"]

[Text] After the two-day NATO Military Planning Committee session held in Brussels the defense ministers of the states comprising the bloc adopted a communique on its results.

This document announces the beginning of the reform of NATO's military structure. By way of a first step, one of the bloc's main commands—in the Channel—has been abolished. Thus, two chief commands will remain within the framework of NATO's allied forces—the Atlantic and the European Commands. The latter will take charge of the bloc's commands in South, Central, and Northwest Europe.

At the Military Planning Committee session the NATO states also expressed their wish to place their experience in solving defense problems at the disposal of interested countries in Central and Eastern Europe (including former Warsaw Pact members). The issue concerns "planning and implementing military construction programs, combat training, military-training activities, and organizing democratic control of the Armed Forces."

Armed Forces Ponder Nuclear Arms 'Threat'

PM2012112191 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1800 GMT 16 Dec 91

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[Text] Today the leaders of the Soviet Armed Forces in Transcaucasia rebutted Italian press reports claiming that subunit commanders have been selling tactical nuclear weapons to local mafia bosses.

Let me recall that the United States has offered our country a vast sum of money—$40 million—to assist it in the elimination of surplus nuclear potential and to establish control over nuclear weapons. The astute Americans do not offer this sort of money for nothing.

The only reaction evoked in our country by phrases such as "the nuclear arms proliferation threat" is deadly boredom. The efforts by several generations of talentless and short-sighted propagandists—fighters against the "nuclear madness"—have done their bit.

Unfortunately, specific nuclear arms proliferation scenarios have never been considered in our country. The seizure of tactical nuclear weapons by some group of terrorists to resolve the Karabakh problem, for instance, or the addition of a nuclear dimension to the Chechen-Ingush problem.

Alas, dozens of examples of scenarios involving the use of nuclear weapons by terrorists in our country can be cited today.

Another dimension of this problem, a less drammatic one but just as dangerous, is the sale of nuclear technologies abroad, either wittingly for the purpose of enrichment, or by error. Since it is prohibited to export virtually anything from our country at the moment, and total control is simply impossible, it is relatively easy to export highly classified and very dangerous technologies. And there are plenty of regimes, in the Near East for example, which are prepared to pay our poor military and their experts a lot of dollars for enabling them to build their own nuclear weapons, and then actively to use their nuclear potential.

United States & Canada

TASS Cites Bush Remarks on 1991 Changes

LD2312085491 Moscow TASS in English 0813 GMT 23 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Ivan Lebedev]

[Text] Washington December 23 TASS—"Many important positive changes took place in 1991 which made the world a much safer place to live in," said U.S. President George Bush. "Now our children are living in a much safer world compared to in the beginning of this year," emphasised the President in an interview on Sunday [22 December] to the American TV net-work "C-Span."

Among the most important events of the year 1991 George Bush named "changes in the Soviet Union, the attempted coup there last summer and the consequent changes that took place in the republics." He also remarked the importance of "emergence and consolidation of democracy in Eastern Europe," formation of an international coalition during the conflict in the Persian Gulf region and the victory of multinational forces in the war with Iraq.

At the same time during the interview which was almost wholly devoted to American internal problems. The president was compelled to admit that he is seriously concerned about the unfavourable tendencies in the national economy. "We are completing this year with an economy that is passing through a stripe of crisis," remarked George Bush. "It has caused harm to many people."

Bush Says Commonwealth Recognition Premature

LD2012135491 Moscow TASS in English 1212 GMT 20 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Andrey Fedyashin]

[Text] Washington December 20 TASS—U.S. President George Bush told a press conference for foreign journalists here on Thursday [19 December] that the United States was unprepared yet to recognise Russia, Ukraine or Belorussia, because it was first necessary to settle certain problems.

Asked whether the United States was going to give full recognition to the Commonwealth of Independent States on the USSR territory and to the republics of which it is comprised, whether the U.S. would agree that Russia should become a successor for the Soviet Union's international agreements and should take its place in the United Nations Security Council, Bush said:

"Well, first on the Commonwealth itself, that is a matter for the various republics to work out. That isn't a matter for the United States to try to dictate. We couldn't do it anyway... But our view is: Engage with democratic reformers— those two key words—those who favour democracy and those who favour reform. And Jim Baker on his trip has been doing that. I have been doing that over the months."

The President further noted that it was yet necessary to settle "nuclear problems" and problems relating "peaceful borders" and observance of CSCE principles, including human rights and respect for minorities in each of the republics.

"And then we will treat, as Jim (Secretary of State James Baker, who recently visited the former USSR - TASS) has told them, with this whole question of what the role of the United States is, when whatever evolves has evolved," Bush said. "As to Russia, they have some sorting out between the republics. As you know, the Soviet Union today has three seats, one in the Security Council and then two in addition at the United Nations. Now they have got a lot of sorting out to do—with this new commonwealth. And we are not fixed to get into the middle of that until they have gone further with the process."

Asked when the U.S. would recognise the former Soviet republics, Bush said he could not give the exact date.

"As I have already said we bear a certain custodian responsibility on this whole question of nuclear weapons non-proliferation. I think we have a disproportionate responsibility for that. And so we want these questions that I've mentioned to you resolved or moved well on the way to resolution.

"Then we at our time will make the determination that you ask about, the official stamp of recognition. I've already indicated that we are very flexible and open about the question of recognition. But we also want to see adherence to these principles that I've outlined. So I can't give you an exact date, but that's going to be right on the frontline of the agenda to discuss with Secretary Baker, whom I talked to just a few minutes ago on the phone. And he filled me in a little on this question of his talks in all these different republics, but I need to sit down with him, with General Scowcroft (presidential national security adviser - TASS) and others, and then we will be talking about timing." Bush said this would take time.

The U.S. President gave a positive answer to a questioner, who wanted to know whether the United States still regarded the Soviet Union as one of the sponsors of the Middle East peace conference. "The answer is yes," Bush said, "We still believe the Soviets will sponsor the talks. Mr. Yeltsin reiterated to Jim Baker, I believe, that they wanted to. That was an agreement. They were very useful, forthcoming and helpful in bringing about the original conference in madrid+.

Bush, who is expected to start his tour of Asian-Pacific states on December 30, also said that during the trip he would pursue the mission "to create new jobs" in the United States, to open Japanese markets for American goods. The President, who came under growing criticism lately for allegedly devoting excessive attention to foreign policy and neglecting domestic economic problems, said he would try to promote "fair trade" with the countries he plans to visit. "We want markets that are fully open to American goods and services," Bush added. "But during the upcoming trip he will not neglect our security and political relationships."

Results of Baker Visit Summarized, Viewed

LD1912211391 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 1530 GMT 19 Dec 91

[Studio discussion between Viktor Levin, announcer of international section of Mayak "Panorama" program, and observer Andrey Ptashnikov; date not given—recorded]

[Excerpts] [Levin] This morning U.S. Secretary of State James Baker left Kiev by air for Brussels. He has already arrived in the Belgian capital, where he is taking part in the meeting of the NATO Council at the level of foreign ministers. That is a separate matter, but now my colleague, observer Andrey Ptashnikov and I would like to sum up the results of James Baker's stay. [passage omitted]

[Ptashnikov] Let us discuss this question: Did Baker fulfill the tasks set for him, the aims he set himself before flying here. In the main, there were three tasks. The first was to find out in whose hands control of our nuclear arsenal lies now, and in whose hands it will lie in the future. That was the first thing.

The second was to see how events are developing in our country after the signing of the Belovezhskaya agreement on the setting up of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The third aim was to discuss questions connected with U.S. humanitarian aid to us in the coming winter.

[Levin] It must be said that Baker sought answers to these questions not just in Moscow, but also in other capitals of our major republics. He visited Alma-Ata, Bishkek, Kiev, and Minsk.

[Ptashnikov] Yes, and this shows that whereas the U.S. secretary of state flew to Moscow, to the center, [illegible] to speak, and all questions could be decided here without going anywhere else, now the situation has clearly changed. Now in order to dot the i's, it is necessary to fly to the capitals of the sovereign, what were formerly Soviet republics, but are now states.

But I repeat, did Baker fulfill the aims he set before his visit to our country? I think he did. As far as I understand it, he received more or less full answers to all the questions he was interested in. Well, in the first place, what will happen to us, at least in the very near future? To some extent thanks to Baker's visit and his meetings with RSFSR President Yeltsin we learned that on 21 December, in Alma-Ata, the Commonwealth of Independent States will be joined by six more states at least. And by the end of the month, there may be a total of 10 states which will sign the treaty on the Commonwealth of Independent States.

[Levin] I would like to return to the question of the control of nuclear weapons. It is known that the Ukraine and Belarus are stating their intention to become nonnuclear states, that is to free themselves... [changes thought] to become nuclear-weapons-free zones.

[Ptashnikov] Yes, and it is interesting that the weapons will not be taken out of there as had been stated, but will be destroyed directly on the spot.

[Levin] On the other hand, Russia and Kazakhstan intend to keep their nuclear weapons; although in his conversation with Baker, President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan said that Kazakhstan did not have any intention of threatening anyone with a nuclear fist. How did Baker react to this?

[Ptashnikov] You know, I think that the main thing here is that Baker learned that after the treaty on the Commonwealth of Independent States is signed by these 10 states—let us talk about 10 states for now—a single command will be set up for the strategic armed forces of the Commonwealth.

[Levin] We now call them the strategic deterrent forces.

[Ptashnikov] Yes, the strategic deterrent forces. So, it is precisely this command which will implement control over our nuclear arsenal. In other words, Baker received assurances that this control will be very strict and centralized. What was feared most of all by the Americans and not only by the Americans but by the West, in general...

[Levin, interrupting] I think not only in the West but in the East, too. And if there is no centralized control over nuclear weapons, this could cause alarm among us, too.

[Ptashnikov] Undoubtedly. That means that Baker also received an answer to the second question, the most important one.

Finally the third question, about U.S. humanitarian aid to us during this winter. I think, as far as I can judge from the conversations which Baker held here, this question was also discussed in great detail. The most important thing is that it was decided that the United States will not only supply us with foodstuffs and other humanitarian aid, but that there will be very rigorous supervision of its distribution, of its supplies and, I repeat, of its distribution to ensure that this does not disappear into the sand as has happened previously when we Soviet people simply did not see it.

[Levin] To tell the truth, it clearly did not disappear into the sand, but into the top echelons of power. [passage omitted]

Solton Views Visit

LD2212084991 Moscow Radio Moscow World Service in English 1310 GMT 19 Dec 91

[Text] Our commentator, Yuriy Solton, analyzed the results of the talks U.S. Secretary of State James Baker had this week in Moscow and in the capitals of a number of former Soviet republics.

He said that there was not even a hint of official pomp during this tour by Mr. Baker. The state secretary said goodbye to the defunct Soviet Union and met the leaders who are to replace it. There was a sad note in his conversation with the soon-to-retire Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev; the man's name is linked with a sharp turn in the Soviet-American relations from confrontation to partnership, which has made it possible to start building a new world order. But, politics are a cruel thing. Personal relations recede to the background when new realities appear.

When the U.S. secretary of state reports to President Bush on his impressions, documents are to be signed in Alma-Ata about expanding the Commonwealth of Independent States set up by Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. By the end of the year, the Commonwealth is expected to have at least 10 members from among the former Soviet Republics. These people are to determine the main directions in the foreign policy of the new alliance.

So far, all the former Republics that have proclaimed their independence declare firmly that in the foreign policy they will uphold principles based on new thinking. This means giving up confrontation and promoting cooperation, disarmament, and respect for human rights. It is with these states individually that the U.S. and other countries will have to deal and, first of all, with Russia which is still a big nuclear power and which claims to the Soviet Union's seat of a permanent member of a UN Security Council.

The European Community nations have already announced they will extend diplomatic recognition to any independent republic appearing in the place of former Yugoslavia or the former Soviet Union if the Republics accept the final Helsinki Act, the Paris Charter for a new Europe, and other documents aimed at strengthening cooperation and security in Europe. The United States is acting more cautiously about the recognition but will have to consider the realities, too.

The future of the Soviet nuclear weapons and the destiny of the agreements about reducing nuclear and conventional armaments were in the center of the talks by James Baker. He has received satisfactory assurances: Ukraine and Belarus have declared they will become nuclear-free states although Minsk links the destruction of nuclear weapons with diplomatic recognition; Kazakhstan, though, declares nuclear weapons will remain on territory while Russia keeps such weapons, too. But, as Russia President Boris Yeltsin has said, any case the control over Soviet nuclear arms will be in the hands of a single center.

There has been a notable report from Washington: U.S. Administration officials have told reporters that the White House believes the dramatic events in the Soviet Union opens unprecedented opportunities for reaching international peace and security. The events in the USSR also put the burden of responsibility on the Western countries in giving aid to the former Soviet

Republics. I think the United States will build its relations with the former Soviet Republics also with an understanding of this responsibility.

Nazarbayev Remarks Misunderstood

LD2012202191 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1800 GMT 20 Dec 91

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[Text] Despite the present chaos it is still easier for us to get to the point than even the most authoritative politicians in the West. No doubt Secretary of State Baker could not understand what was being said when President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan referred to nuclear weapons. Baker understood him as saying that Kazakhstan was prepared to return nuclear weapons to Russia. That is what Baker himself has just stated. But, as we remember, what Nazarbayev actually said after his meeting with Baker was that Kazakhstan would not renounce the nuclear weapons on its territory.

But perhaps Baker is right after all. This would mean that the republics are changing tack with truly unbelievable speed.

U.S. Opposes Ship Repairs in Philippines

LD2212042991 Moscow TASS in English 1241 GMT 20 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Aleksandr Bokhonko]

[Text] Manila December 20 TASS—The U.S. Navy Command in the Pacific Ocean opposes allowing Soviet ships be repaired in the Philippine state shipyards Filseco, located next to the U.S. military base in Subic Bay.

Soviet ships will be allowed into the bay only after they are inspected by U.S. specialists, the Navy statement said.

For years, the U.S. command's policy kept Soviet and other socialist countries' ships away from the bay, stripping the corporation of mass profits.

Leticia Shahani, head of the Philippine Senate Commission for Foreign Policy, criticised this policy on Thursday, stressing that the command's attempts to decide what ships can and what cannot call at Philippine ports brings U.S.-Philippine relations back to 1947 when the country was forced to allow U.S. military bases into its territory.

According to the newspaper MALAYA, the U.S. position was also denounced by the Philippine shipyard as humiliating.

Philippine Senator Wigberto Tanada said on Thursday that U.S. nuclear weapons removed from South Korea are currently stored at the Subic Bay base. He said he will press the U.S. Government for more specific information on this issue.

China

PRC To Preserve Relations With Republics

LD2012184891 Moscow TASS in English 1718 GMT 20 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondents Andrey Kirilov and Vladimir Fedoruk]

[Text] Beijing December 20 TASS—China intends to preserve relations with republics of the former Soviet Union on the principle of peaceful co-existence, a high-ranking representative of the Chinese Foreign Ministry told TASS today, speaking on condition of anonymity.

When the situation with the Commonwealth's formation becomes clear, there will be no difficulties on the Chinese side as regards the recognition and development of relations with republics of the former USSR, he said. China sets no preliminary conditions here.

The representative told foreign correspondents at the Beijing International Club, the Chinese side sees no difficulties in dealing with Yeltsin. He is now the president of the Russian Federation.

Contacts between leaders should be a normal practice in relations between two countries, he stressed.

China is concerned over the situation with the Soviet nuclear weapons, now stationed in four republics, he said. At the same time, it takes into account the republics' current consultations on this issue, and hopes the centralized control over the nuclear weapons will be preserved.

As for the place of the Soviet Union in the United Nations Security Council, the representative said China cannot so far [as to] give a clear answer to this question, waiting for a consensus between the former Soviet republics.

Now they have different points of view. In short, the situation has not become clear, the Chinese official noted.

Soviet, Chinese Experts Hold Border Talks

LD2112134991 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1320 GMT 21 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Vladimir Kashirov]

[Text] Beijing, 21 Dec (TASS)—A consultative meeting of Soviet and Chinese experts took place in Beijing from 16 to 21 December. There was an exchange of opinions on specific questions of the forthcoming demarcation of the eastern part of the Soviet-Chinese border. The sides agreed that the discussion of these questions will continue in Moscow.

Northeast Asia

Japan Continues Peace Talks With Republics

LD2012131291 Moscow TASS in English 1249 GMT 20 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Vladimir Solntsev]

[Text] Tokyo December 20 TASS—Russia will be on the front line of talks devoted to a peace treaty with Japan, Japanese Foreign Ministry spokesman Taizo Watanabe said at a briefing on Friday.

He said the Japanese Government will continue talks with Russia and other former Soviet republics on this issue.

Mongolia Recognizes Sovereignty of Republics

LD2112105191 Moscow TASS in English 0949 GMT 21 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Dugfar Sanzhiyev]

[Text] Ulaanbaatar December 21 (TASS)—Mongolia has recognised the independence of Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenia, Uzbekistan and Ukraine, the Mongolian newspaper ARDYN ERH said. The newspaper said the Mongolian Parliament has decided to establish diplomatic relations with these states.

Near East & South Asia

Israeli Ambassador Says Relations 'Normal'

TA1912074991 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0505 GMT 19 Dec 91

[Telephone interview with Arye Levin, Israeli ambassador to the USSR, by Me'ir Einstein—live]

[Text] [Einstein] Good morning, Arye Levin, the Israeli ambassador in Moscow.

[Levin] A very good morning to you.

[Einstein] What title should I use: Israeli ambassador in the USSR, or Israeli ambassador in Russia?

[Levin] Just Israeli ambassador.

[Einstein] Is it not an odd feeling?

[Levin] It certainly is. This is an historic moment of one regime being replaced by another, which would be difficult for any country, and it is even more so for a huge country such as this one.

[Einstein] How does this change affect the embassy activities?

[Levin] It does not. Our contacts with those official institutions that still exist—some may have stopped functioning—are normal. The dialogue between us and the Soviet or Russian Administration is conducted in an ordinary fashion. I am referring mainly to several facets vital to us, such as aliyah. In this respect, I am glad to note that no change has taken place to date. We hope very much the situation will remain unchanged in the future. As for other things in which official institutions are involved, such as economy, trade, and so forth, difficulties can sometimes arise. Generally speaking, however, we do not have extensive business ties with the USSR these days, and we do not suffer from its inability to repay its debts. For that reason, our problems are not as grave as those encountered by Western countries.

[Einstein] You said the embassy is in contact with the Russian regime. Have you forged any links with the authorities of the Ukraine or Belarus?

[Levin] Yes, we are maintaining contacts with the Ukraine, and we plan to visit Kiev as a delegation in a few days to establish a general consulate there. Our actions are guided by a concern for the future; that is, we intend to establish more... [changes thought] that is, in the sense of diplomatic relations. All this may happen in a not-so-distant future. Thus, we are in fact maintaining relations with the Ukraine, as well as other republics. As you may know, representatives of all the republics plan to convene and form a new body in Alma Ata on 21 December. We have contacts with most of these republics.

[Einstein] What have you heard about the position of the Soviet Jews? Is there an increased demand for visas for Israel in the wake of the disintegration of the USSR, or has panic not set in yet?

[Levi] There is no panic for the time being, but there is concern. The concern is due to the fear of the uncertain and the unexpected. The Soviet regime is in its death throes, and no one knows what or who will replace it. The Russians expect to inherit, and I believe they are right. The Ukrainians also believe they should be the heirs of the Soviet regime. The Jews are worried, because they have been through so many changes so many times in the past. Previous changes were not this extreme, but they were somewhat similar to the present situation. Therefore, they are worried, and they do not know what to do. In the meantime, however, as long as there are no outbreaks of ethnic violence, the Jews react neither with panic nor with an increased desire to make aliyah.

[Einstein] Israel's Ambassador in Moscow Arye Levin, thank you very much.

Egypt To Recognize Commonwealth States

LD2312094991 Moscow TASS in English 0922 GMT 23 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Mikhail Krutikhin]

[Text] Cairo December 23 TASS—"Egypt is prepared to recognise the members of the Commonwealth of

Independent States, depending on the situation in each of them," Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa stated with reference to President Husni Mubarak. "The recognition will come" the minister said, "After Egypt effects all the necessary contacts."

In the meantime, President Mubarak addressed congratulation messages to all the 11 heads of the new independent states. The USSR Embassy in Cairo informed the Egyptian Foreign Ministry on Sunday evening that it would henceforth represent the interests of the Russian Federation and would bear responsibility for commitments earlier assumed in Egypt on behalf of the diplomatic mission of the Soviet Union.

Iran To Open Consulates in Republics

LD2212034691 Moscow All-Union Radio First Program Radio-1 Network in Russian 1700 GMT 19 Dec 91

[From the "New Wave" program]

[Text] Iran will soon open consulates in the Central Asian Republics and in Kazakhstan, the Iranian Government has decided. Iran operates an embassy in Moscow and a diplomatic mission in Baku.

Li Peng's India Visit Viewed as 'Positive'

PM1912120091 Moscow IZVESTIYA in Russian 17 Dec 91 Union Edition p 4

[V. Skosyrev commentary on visit to India by Li Peng, premier of the PRC State Council, under the general heading: "Thaw Over the Himalayas"]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] The confrontation between India and China in the Himalayas (according to Western sources the Indians have some 11 divisions there, while the Chinese have even more troops) has cast a gloomy shadow over the whole of Asia. Only the visit by Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to Beijing in 1988 helped to lower the level of confrontation and restore bilateral relations to a more or less normal footing. But the alienation has by no means disappeared.

And now we have Li Peng's return visit to Delhi. Can we speak of a change in the geopolitical distribution of forces on the content as a result of the talks that have just ended? I think it is premature to draw this conclusion. The border dispute remains unresolved. But Li Peng and his Indian colleague at the talks, N. Rao, found a quite reasonable way out of a complex situation by deciding to postpone examining mutual territorial claims until better times.

It is therefore not surprising that when border issues were raised both leaders spoke in intentionally vague terms. Li Peng stated that India and China have agreed not to allow the border dispute to have an adverse effect on their relationship. N. Rao, for his part, said that the dispute should be resolved "in the light of historical facts and present realities."

What are these realities, from the viewpoint of Beijing and Delhi? Strange as it may seem, both rivals saw a threat to their interests in the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the transformation of the United States into the sole superpower. Before leaving for Delhi Li Peng expressed his attitude to events in the USSR and Eastern Europe in the most unequivocal terms, stressing that they do not serve the cause of peace and stability. "We are observing great chaos, and the situation is unpredictable," he claimed. There is even less reason for India to rejoice in the USSR's collapse, since for many years our state was its political supporter and a source of arms deliveries.

And now, as a result of consultations, China and India have formed the common view that a unipolar world is dangerous for them. Clearly referring to the United States, the premiers came out against "any country... being allowed to manipulate world affairs and pursue a policy of strength."

Thus an unexpectedly high degree of mutual understanding was achieved on a global problem. But at the regional level contradictions remain. Delhi, in particular, expressed dissatisfaction that China is supplying missiles and nuclear technology to Pakistan. In India's opinion these deliveries destabilize the situation in South Asia. China also has plenty of grounds for protests. It does not at all like the activeness of the Tibetan refugees, who have set up a government in exile in India, headed by the dalai lama.

B. Mishra, formerly an Indian diplomat and now adviser to the biggest opposition party, claims that India and China are potential allies. Potential—maybe. But that is still a long way off. After Li Peng's visit the two Asian states will look at each other less suspiciously and will start really developing bilateral trade. This is the main positive feature, and this outcome of the talks can only be welcomed.

Sub-Saharan Africa

Union Agreements With Namibia Said Invalid

LD2212045591 Moscow TASS in English 1130 GMT 20 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Aleksandr Prosvetov; Moscow TASS in English at 1431 on 20 December transmits a service message killing this item]

[Text] Windhoek December 20 TASS—All agreements, including the agreement to establish diplomatic relations, signed by Namibia with the Soviet Union cease to be effective owing to its disintegration, declared Namibia's Minister of Information and Broadcasting Hidipo Hamutenya in a television interview.

Namibia will refrain from establishing diplomatic relations with new states formed in the former Soviet Union's place until they decide their foreign policy and their stand on different international issues, said the minister.

The Soviet Union had concluded an agreement about cultural and scientific cooperation with Namibia in September 1991. An agreement about air service was also expected to be signed between the two countries.

Envoy Clarifies Statement

LD2212045991 Moscow TASS in English 1556 GMT 20 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Aleksandr Prosvetov]

[Text] Windhoek December 20 TASS—Namibian Minister for Television and Radio Broadcast and Information Hidipo Hamutenya said on Friday [20 December], the Namibian TV and Radio Corporation NBC had distorted his pronouncements on relations with the Soviet Union.

Soviet Ambassador to Namibia Andrey Urnov told a news conference here, he had gotten in touch with the minister and the latter requested him to inform the press on the inaccuracy of the TV company.

It is not that all the agreements signed by the Namibia with the Soviet Union become invalid due to the USSR's disintegration, as the NBC claimed.

The Soviet obligations on external agreements should pass over to its succesors, which are sovereign nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Hamutenya stressed.

Last September the Soviet Union and Namibia signed an agreement on cultural and scientific cooperation. They were also expected to sign an agreement on bilateral air communication.

East Europe

Defense Agreement Signed With Romania

PM2312100591 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 21 Dec 91 First Edition p 1

[TASS correspondent report: "Agreement Concluded"]

[Text] Moscow, 19 Dec—Marshal of the Soviet Union Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov, USSR defense minister, and Lieutenant General Nicolae Spiroyu [name as transliterated], Romanian minister of national defense, who is a working visit here, today signed an agreement on bilateral cooperation between the two countries' military departments.

As already reported, on 18 December a similar agreement was concluded between the USSR and Hungarian Defense Ministries.

West Europe

EC Envoy Urges Single Economic Union

LD2012203291 Moscow TASS in English 1645 GMT 20 Dec 91

[By TASS diplomatic correspondent Sergey Postanogov]

[Text] Moscow December 20 TASS—Political and economic stability on the territory of the former Soviet Union is necessary for the productive development of cooperation between the European Community and the sovereign republics from the former Soviet Union, the EC Commission's envoy to Moscow Michael Emerson told TASS.

A single economic union, a single monetary and well-organised financial system will make our cooperation easier, he said.

Emerson refuted rumours about alleged cuts in aid to the Soviet Union by the European Parliament.

He said a 120-ton shipment of medical supplies and baby-food would arrive in Moscow on December 21. Another shipment of food for Moscow and St. Petersburg, worth 200 million ECU [European Currency Unit], is due to arrive soon.

Emerson said the commission of the European Community is now working to implement a 300-million-dollar humanitarian aid programme, while preparations are under way to supply food and medicines worth another 1.5 billion dollars.

Aid to sovereign republics from the former Soviet Union also includes technical and humanitarian assistance, Emerson said.

The commission has approved 400 projects in the field of power engineering, finances, transport, food supplies and training managers.

Gorbachev Conversation With Mitterrand Noted

LD2112181691 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1745 GMT 21 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Irina Golubeva]

[Text] Paris, 21 Dec (TASS)—According to AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, citing a source in the Elysee Palace, a telephone conversation took place Saturday [21 December] morning between President Francois Mitterrand and Mikhail Gorbachev.

The conversation, which lasted for 30-40 minutes, touched upon "the change in the situation in the Soviet Union," the agency specifies, referring to the same source.

French Firm Seeks Guarantees for Pipeline

*OW2312022891 Moscow INTERFAX in English
2140 GMT 22 Dec 91*

[From the "Soviet Business Report" feature; transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The French company, Antrepose, has requested the Gazprom Concern to provide guarantees for the financing of construction work on a gas pipeline in Algeria. Antrepose is bidding in a tender for the rights to build the pipeline, the results of which will largely be determined by the financial terms offered by the various contractors.

Antrepose has approached Gazprom because it intends to bring the Soviet-French Joint Venture, KATAMAK, into the project, and the founders of KATAMAK are two Soviet companies, Armgazprom and Soyuzgazproekt and the French company, Temis.

But before coming to a decision the management of Gazprom must weigh all the pros and cons, since any delays in payment on the part of Antrepose will mean that Gazprom will have to withdraw its own hard currency resources (some $200 million).

Genscher Thanks Shevardnadze for 'Achievements'

*LD2212190491 Moscow TASS in English 1559 GMT
22 Dec 91*

[By TASS correspondent Sergey Sosnovskiy]

[Text] Bonn December 22 TASS—German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher held another telephone conversation with his former Soviet counterpart Eduard Shevardnadze on Sunday [22 December]. According to German Foreign Ministry press service, Genscher thanked Shevardnadze and President Mikhail Gorbachev for their "historic achievements" and expressed confidence the two leaders will keep on working constructively for the benefit of international relations.

Gorbachev Meets German Firm President on Aid

*LD1912211191 Moscow TASS in English 1924 GMT
19 Dec 91*

[By TASS correspondent Sergey Ryabikin]

[Text] Moscow December 19 TASS—The president of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev received today the president of the German organisation "Ker Deutschland" Klaus Neldner.

After the meeting TASS was told that the German organization delivered 24 incubators for earlyborn children, wheelchairs and all kinds of medicine. Klaus Neldner mentioned also the delivery of food, espcially to Moscow and St. Petersburg. "Ker Germany" [as received] took special interest in the delivery of medical goods and medicine the last few months, an estimated value of 32 million marks.

"Ker Deutschland" said next year it will build a center for orthopaedic ill people. Also planned is a cancer center for children with a capacity for 2000 children. Germany will also provide 40-50 doctors and nurses, which will give this project a long term character.

German Firm To Install Bread Factories

*OW2312012691 Moscow INTERFAX in English
2140 GMT 22 Dec 91*

[From the "Soviet Business Report" feature; transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The German concern Anton Ohlert has signed a contract to supply and install 15 small bread factories in Kemerovo, Western Siberia in 1992. The local coal-mining association "Kuzbascoal" will pay for the supplies with hard currency and 200,000 tons of coal. In 1991, Anton Ohlert set up two such factories by contract with Kuzbascoal. Production of the bread and bread products is already underway.

In 1991, Anton Ohlert supplied the USSR with a plant which produces tin cans for the Far East's fish canneries. It also set up a production line to provide packaging for a condensed milk factory in Rezekne, Latvia. A Moscow representative of Anton Ohlert says that the firm is seeking more active cooperation with small and medium-sized producers in the former Soviet republics.

The concern Anton Ohlert is an umbrella organization encompassing 60 German companies which produce equipment for the food, packaging and chemical industries.

Baader, one of the concern's member firms, recently reached an agreement to rig two ships in the Murmansk Trawler Fleet with equipment for processing fish and sea products.

Shaposhnikov Receives Swedish Ambassador

*PM2012133591 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA
in Russian 19 Dec 91 First Edition p 1*

[TASS report under the "One-Line Reports" rubric: "USSR Defense Minister Receives Swedish Ambassador"]

[Text] As TASS's correspondent was informed at the USSR Defense Ministry Information Directorate, Defense Minister Marshal of Aviation Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov received Orjan Berner, Swedish ambassador to the USSR, at his request 18 December. During the conversation they discussed questions of mutual interest.

Political & Social

Gorbachev Staff Reportedly Vacates Offices

OW2112175791 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1507 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] As "IF" [INTERFAX] learned from well-informed sources, Aleksandr Gorkovlyuk, first deputy chief of the USSR President's staff, has vacated his office in the Kremlin.

According to the source, Gorbachev's team began to leave its offices in the Kremlin in compliance with Russian President Boris Yeltsin's decree on transferring the property of the USSR President's staff to Russia. In the near future members of the Russian president's staff will settle down in the Kremlin.

Grachev Comments on Gorbachev Remarks, Future

'Will Not Leave' Political Scene

OW2012162091 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1440 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] If the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent states rises to a new level and is backed by the law, the Soviet president will not leave the political scene and concentrate on public activity.

This news was revealed to IF [INTERFAX] by chief of the Soviet president's press service, Andrey Grachev, as he talked about Friday's [20 December] telephone conversation between Mikhail Gorbacher and Chancellor of Germany Helmut Kohl.

Mr. Grachev said that given such a course of events, Mikhail Gorbachev would make every possible effort to promote the democratic reform in the former Soviet Union.

During the telephone conversation which took place on the Soviet president's initiative and which lasted for about an hour, Mikhail Gorbachev and Helmut Kohl confirmed that they would continue to make efforts to prevent the roll-back of the current democratization drive as a result of the economic crisis, and to ensure that the favourable changes in international relations be consolidated and promoted.

Talking with the leader of a major American corporation, Diomidis, Mr. Jim Harrison, Mikhail Gorbachev did not rule out the possibility of his heading the international committee for assisting the citizens of the former USSR. What is meant here is the establishment of an air bridge between the two countries.

Gorbachev Awaits Alma-Ata Results

OW2112175191 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1507 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The leader of the USSR President's press service Andrey Grachev told IF's [INTERFAX] correspondent that Mikhail Gorbachev is not likely to announce his resignation on Saturday [21 December]. According to Grachev, the President is awaiting the official results of the conference in Alma-Ata. Apart from the stand of participants in the Alma-Ata conference concerning the USSR presidency, M. Gorbachev's statement on this issue will also be necessary, said A. Grachev.

In the near future Mikhail Gorbachev will take a stand toward the developments in Alma-Ata, said the leader of his press service. It's out of the question that he will simply take into account the decisions taken in Alma-Ata, said A. Grachev. According to him, the President will evidently make a political statement in the form of a televised address to the nation.

On Friday [20 December] M. Gorbachev had a telephone conversation with President Francois Mitterrand of France, A. Grachev told IF's correspondent.

During their talk F. Mitterrand invited Gorbachev and his wife to visit France "in view of the fact that the previous trips made in the framework of official visits gave no opportunity to get acquainted with French realities in full". The day before Chancellor Helmut Kohl invited M. Gorbachev to visit Germany.

Grachev Interviewed

LD2112233891 Paris France-Inter Radio Network in French 2300 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Interview with USSR presidential spokesman Andrey Grachev by correspondent Ulysse Gosset in Moscow on 21 December—recorded]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] As far as Mikhail Gorbachev is concerned, he has no more work but, according to his followers, he is in good spirits. The former president of the Soviet Union has not yet officially given his opinion on the Alma-Ata agreements, but will do so shortly, according to his spokesman Andrey Grachev:

[Grachev] Presently, he is awaiting formal confirmation, the texts, and the official decisions of this meeting, and he confirmed that after that, he will take his stand and make it public at the beginning of next week. What is worrying him mostly is not the fate or the future of the presidential institution, or of his own position, but the fate of the process which he himself started nearly six years ago. It is my opinion that his next duty will be that of an active politician who will try, as much as possible, to act as a support for the democratic process.

[Gosset] What would Mr. Gorbachev do if he retired tomorrow?

[Grachev] Sleep a lot. He wants to rest for a short while. Besides, he received an invitation today from President Mitterrand to come to France in the first half of next year. He accepted the invitation.

Gorbachev Gives Interview to CBS

LD2212225891 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 2134 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Report on an interview with USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev by correspondent Artem Borovik for CBS Television from the Kremlin in Moscow on 21 December—recorded]

[Text] [Borovik] Gorbachev agreed to this interview on 20 December and it was held yesterday, on 21 December, at the very moment when in Alma-Ata, at a meeting to which he had not been invited, understandings had been reached, including one on eliminating the post of USSR president.

So this conversation was the very last interview of Gorbachev in his capacity as president of the USSR and his very first interview in his capacity as ex-president. These days the Kremlin resembles a home which is being vacated by the inhabitants which have occupied it since time immemorial. The American journalists who were present at this meeting were unable to keep from comparing the atmosphere in the Kremlin to that which prevailed in the White House in Washington during the impeachment—the forced resignation—of Richard Nixon in 1974: a lonely leader, some aides who have remained loyal to him, and an abundance of security service agents who do not fully understand to whom they are now subordinate.

In the coatroom on the first floor there are no coatroom attendants. They say they went out to lunch a week ago. The Kremlin resembles a burst balloon, the string of which is being strongly grasped out of habit by the hand of its once mighty owner.

Mikhail Sergeyevich appeared in front of the television camera at exactly the right time. He was of a cheerful, even courageous disposition. He joked and smiled, perhaps more frequently than usual. I caught myself thinking that as I was speaking with him, I was fearful of inflicting further pain.

Mikhail Sergeyevich, what comes next? Boris Yeltsin was forced to leave the post of first secretary and came back, Shevardnadze resigned and came back, (?do you intend) to make a political comeback?

[Gorbachev] I do not think that in general I will quit politics. The role I will play will be determined in the near future. I intend to await the outcome of the Alma-Ata summit, where the leaders of all 12 republics went, albeit Georgia was there only as an observer. Still, I think they will reach an agreement; they simply have to. The country needs progress, accord, cooperation. We have lost so much time, and now we have to act. As soon as I receive the official documents and see that the Commonwealth is a reality, then I will make my decision in a few days.

[Borovik] You know Boris Yeltsin well. Give us an approximate sketch of his character, and what kind of personality is becoming our leader.

[Gorbachev] I still hope that the changes taking place in the Commonwealth and the new role taken by the republics—they are becoming independent states—will nonetheless not squander or throw to the winds the political capital built up in international relations thanks to the new thinking. Especially important, these relations have formed and taken deep root in both American and Soviet society; they are relations of cooperation and partnership, of friendship and trust, I would say. I think that Yeltsin and the other republics will accept this policy. I do not think that it is an easy and simple transition from one partner in the form of the Union and its leadership to now have to deal with the new Commonwealth; quite aside from the fact that there are a whole dozen new politicians in charge of the Commonwealth, who have arrived due to perestroyka and elections, and of course they are shaping up as leaders for domestic pursuit of reform, within their states, and plus the fact that they are only beginning their careers in international politics. Nonetheless, I am sure that what is most important will be retained.

I think that here, our American friends, both as regards partners, as regards the U.S. administration and the American people, should have no doubts. The societies, the two societies, two great peoples have moved toward each other. This process will gain momentum. Politicians who stand in the way have no future. Of this I am profoundly convinced. So, let us express the hope that what has taken shape will not only not be, will not only be preserved, but developed. I in turn will assist this. I have opportunities to do this.

[Borovik] Just as Yeltsin has. It is very important for us to hear your assessment in particular for the world to be calm; the world trusts you.

[Gorbachev] The Yeltsin phenomenon has yet to unfold, for a full political assessment to be given of it. Of the Yeltsin reform, his role in opposition has been studied most. Here he has shown that he is capable of a great deal, and has indeed done and revealed a great deal, and, cooperating with the democratic forces, has also taken upon himself enormous responsibility in defending this path.

As regards Yeltsin in the role of the creator, the reformer, of reconstruction, Boris Nikolayevich has a long way to go yet both in terms of learning about himself, and especially in finding himself capable of cooperating with very many various forces in the interests of advancing the reforms. It is still early here yet to speak of Yeltsin and to place a full stop.

We will hope that he understands the whole enormous responsibility which lies on his shoulders. The euphoria of the election campaign has passed. Rights have arrived; power has arrived; and very great responsibility has arrived. And this also has to be understood. And moreover, this has yet to be transformed into a reasonable, effective policy. There is the desire. We can state this. We will, I think, support these positive intentions of Yeltsin and his cohort and teams. But where it is necessary, where we find there is a need to make comments in connection with doubts of one kind or another—I think that we will find a way to make a suggestion.

In any event, I would wish success for his reforms, and to endure the trials, the ordeal of great responsibility and the ability to create—this is a new stage.

Thus, you and I will place the final full stop—and thus an assessment, a little later.

[Borovik] You have given a good assessment of him as a politician, but what of the person, purely as a person. What do you feel of your relations with him?

[Gorbachev] He is a sincere man. I would wish that he will always be consistent, not giving in to wavering and pressure, just as I would wish the same for myself. That is what I wish because success is very important for us, that our cause, our great cause, should move forward. I think that more democracy would not be a bad thing for Yeltsin.

[Borovik] Yeltsin once told the world: Do not worry, my finger is on the nuclear button. Can we trust him?

[Gorbachev] This question, you know, is being discussed in Alma-Ata today. It was discussed between us on a preliminary basis. It was discussed at a meeting with Secretary of State Baker. It was discussed with other partners in this process. It seems to me that a formula has been found and will be found. At any rate, I do not imagine that there will be three or four fingers on the button. That is ruled out. Collective control—but as far as the command is concerned, there has to be a single command. That has to be defined today, and such a formula must be firmed up in Alma-Ata.

Let us not anticipate the results of that discussion. I am aware of how this issue should be decided. At any rate there must be no doubts over whether a slackening of control over nuclear weapons is going to take place. That must not take place. Of that I am convinced. But our system is even tougher than that of the Americans. I remind the Americans of this all the time.

[Borovik] Who is in control of the button now, at this minute?

[Gorbachev] At this moment it is Gorbachev and the minister of defense. This will be the case for the time being and it will remain strictly so until the complete...[changes thought] Currently there is discussion, a method is being worked out. It will be confirmed, and a process will take place in which there will not be a break of even 10 seconds. Everything will continue as in a single process. There cannot be any violations. I include this as a very important element in the adoption of those decisions on the results of the Alma-Ata meeting which will face me later.

[Borovik] Do you believe in the possibility of a civil war between the republics in our country?

[Gorbachev] I think that, despite the whole element of conflict in the situation and despite the real reciprocal claims which exist and which have arisen, the chances are greater that war can be prevented, that military clashes can be ruled out.

But I should say that because of this the Commonwealth must be capable of living. This is why I, even at this final stage, sent my views to all the participants on the eve of the meeting. They have in general one goal: to ensure that this Commonwealth does not turn out to be just a soap bubble; that they do not sign the papers, go away, and nothing works.

That is why I am concerned with establishing the true, right principles on which the Commonwealth should base its work, to create the necessary institutions which will reflect the nature of this association, namely that this is a Commonwealth of Independent States. But at the same time the institutions will ensure interaction.

Finally, I drew their attention to the necessity of legal succession. This too is necessary so that the constitutional process will continue. Therefore, I support a commonwealth which is capable of living. If this is the case, then everything else will be secondary: how the economy question will be solved, how the interethnic question and others will be solved. Everything that can come up in relations between the republics will be decided with greater ease if this Commonwealth is capable of living and is not stillborn politically.

[Borovik] You said not so long ago that what is happening now is not quite democratic.

[Gorbachev] You know, I will not give my attention to this question because I took a principled position long ago. Such steps, from whichever side they are taken, are a matter for those people's consciences. I cannot relate, in a political or human sense, on such a level. I am a man of a different character and have a different view of political and human relations.

[Borovik] Mikhail Sergeyevich, why does Yeltsin have such an attitude toward you? Maybe there is some feeling there, stronger than simple dislike? In turn, do you or do you not like him?

[Gorbachev] You know, there could be a lot of exaggeration here after all. If we are to consider the whole history of my relations with Yeltsin, then in principle we always had normal relations. Furthermore, you will generally find little disagreement in our relations, in our aims. By the way, I actively supported him in his work as secretary of the Moscow city party committee, because I knew what was on his shoulders. But this was only until it took such a form that Moscovites began to feel anxious about some things.

You know, now ,returning to this after so many years, I think that Yeltsin then ran into something which we all ran into. So, maybe, some kind of misunderstanding emerged then. But I do not think that this should be transformed into...the present relationship, and all the more so to some kind of...turn it into rancour. No, I think that is preposterous. Moreover, today the responsibility, the aims and the value of what we are all tackling, and what we are yet to tackle, are such that we must rise above all this. That is why I do not go into the finer points of Yeltsin's position and attitude toward me. I can say at present that our cooperation has been on the increase after the Novo-Ogarevo process when it emerged in April. It has become not only businesslike but healthy from the point of view of human relations. If I happen to hear statements of some nature, you know, made by Yeltsin, I know that this is his style, this is his nature. I take no notice of it. I pick out only the essence, and discard the rest, leaving it on his conscience. But I would not like to emphasize this at present. We cooperated during the last months, as well as during the last days. For example, several days ago we had yet another meeting. We talked and discussed things again in a normal way and in a normal atmosphere, aware of the responsibility which we bear.

[Borovik] Mikhail Sergeyevich, it is no secret that you are more popular in the world and in the United States than in your own country. How can you explain this?

[Gorbachev] I have already explained this once. When you look at something at a distance, you see what takes place in the country, the face it shows to the world, how it reveals itself. You see that what takes place has a lot of potential, has prospects. Our foreign partners assess what happens here from such positions. If one takes into account that this has had an enormous effect on the whole world, then it is important to bear this in mind, and our partners bear this in mind. Not only politicians, analysts, but ordinary people as well, since the world has really warmed up, become more human. This is all very important. Here, in this country, the assessments of what is taking place in the country are influenced by the fact that this reform and all these changes are taking place in our own country. In the country where a totalitarian system has existed for decades, where society was in the grip of ideology and administration, of repressions, or of authoritarian power, as recently. A society where only one form of ownership, state ownership, has prevailed which deprived us of the option of initiative in the sphere of the economy.

That is, a great deal of what now needs to be altered. If I add that this was a super-militarized society, and that we now need to get away from this, then this again affects an immense part of the country, that is, it is fundamental interests that are affected here. The process is progressing painfully, with difficulty, and people are thinking that, perhaps, if there had been no perestroyka then perhaps something would have been able to have been done, to improve things in some way and at least preserve the level that then existed and continue like that. But it was impossible to continue.

The jolts—you know for yourself, you are a citizen, you and I are citizens of this country—you know for yourself the shocks we have already heard, how many attempts there have been to reform this country. And they have failed one after another. It was obvious, therefore, that individual reforms would not produce the result. What was needed was to change the system. And since changing the system is difficult, especially in such a huge country, where there are so many peoples, where so many problems and prejudices have been amassed and where there exists this leveling psychology—everything, therefore, moves painfully and all of this is linked together.

Well, Gorbachev the reformer evidently did not think everything through and brought us to this. But I have to say that it was already impossible to wait any longer. It could have developed in such a way as to lead to the collapse of this country, or it would have remained on the sidelines of civilization, of world civilization. Notwithstanding everything that I hear, therefore, notwithstanding the grumbles that reach me, I want to say and I always say to my people that no matter how much I think and reflect about it, all of this had to be done and it is right that we started to do it and were determined to do it.

[Borovik] And overall, are you satisfied with what you did, your contribution?

[Gorbachev] Well, I have to say that as far as the choice of reform, of cardinal reform, is concerned, I would not cast any doubt on that. As concerns the fact that very serious complications have been caused in people's everyday lives, then we probably did not manage to avoid certain errors here.

[Borovik] Certain American universities have expressed a desire for you to come and be a prominent professor and academic in the United States for a few months, perhaps giving lectures, and so on. Is this something that you would be considering, as one proposal?

[Gorbachev] You know, to begin with, I was born here in this country, it is where I have lived and will live, and moreover I do not have any plans to break with this country, certainly not at this time, when what I started is entering a decisive phase. I should be here. It is the main cause in my life, and not only my life, or that of this country, but of the world. So, that is the main thing.

Second, such proposals have indeed come in, and not only from several major American centers, but also from Japan, from Germany, from France. They are serious and interesting proposals, and I will try to implement them, combining my political and public work in this country with this proposal. I do not believe it is anything unacceptable or unrealistic. I am looking into it.

[Borovik] Do you have the feeling that the U.S. Administration betrayed you?

[Gorbachev] No.

[Borovik] You and President Ronald Reagan became quite close friends. Don't you have the feeling that if Reagan were in the White House now, your fate and the fate of perestroyka could have formed somewhat differently?

[Gorbachev] I do not think so.

[Borovik] Do you still consider yourself a communist?

[Gorbachev] You know, I am a convinced democrat. Someone recently reminded me that back in my student days, in the 1950's, I was regarded as a bit of a dissident, to use the current term. But in general radicalism has always been part of my nature; I am a democrat quite resolutely in favor of change and affirmation of justice. This has always been within me, and remains so. I even discovered some of my old letters which Raisa Maksimovna kept. I saw what I was like in those years. I was young, 19-20. That is the way I have remained in this sense.

Concerning my commitment, my philosophical or whatever inclinations, so to speak: I consider myself a man committed to the socialist idea. I have already told the Americans this. And I link it with this: I see myself as part of a people's long quest for a better and just world, better and just life, better and just society. And I link this to freedom—political, spiritual, economic—and with greater protection for the individual, with democracy. What would be wrong if we were all to stand for this, whether we are socialists or not? It would be fine. And you know, let us take a broader view of the world. I will show you countries that espouse a different approach, and politicians who espouse different policies, but there is much in what they do that brings us together. We move toward each other, civilization is converging, and I think that the greatest merit of the new thinking is that we noticed this and proposed making it the foundation for politics: to move closer to each other, unite, accept the challenges of contemporary civilization, the pain and worries, and pool people's efforts, on the basis of human values. Let us stand upon this.

[Borovik] How does Raisa Maksimovna view this dramatic change to your lives? It can be described as dramatic. How does she see it? How does your daughter see it?

[Gorbachev] You know, they are hardened people. They have been subjected to great trials, together with me. I might be old-fashioned in using such an old cliche, but I always feel that Raisa Maksimovna is standing shoulder-to-shoulder alongside me, her spiritual affinity and involvement. The same goes for my daughter and for my entire family. I was convinced of this once again when I was in that difficult situation in Foros. When I made my choice, my family's answer was brief: We are with you, to the end. That says it all.

[Borovik] I should like to wish you and your family, Raisa Maksimovna and your daughter, success.

[Gorbachev] I thank you for this meeting. I am happy with our conversation, and I would like to take the opportunity—after all, we are meeting on the eve of Christmas, and I greet all the viewers and all the Americans, I have many friends there, so many letters have come from America over these years, it might be hundreds of thousands, perhaps it might even have reached a million letters from America. I have every ground to say that I have many friends there, and I greet them all on the holiday. I wish everyone prosperity, and for there to be happiness in every family.

[Borovik] Very soon we will realize whether we have made another mistake in getting rid of Gorbachev in such haste, or whether we have simply unburdened ourselves of what we should have got rid of even earlier. But the feeling that this man has been treated more harshly than he deserves did not desert either our film crew nor, so it seemed to us, Gorbachev himself, despite all his traditional air of optimism. Perhaps this Kremlin dreamer did not manage to become the leader for whom our country has yearned for a thousand years. And he is not like leaders in the classical sense of the word—decisive and masterful. In Gorbachev we probably wanted to see the embodiment of our innermost hopes, which it will now be up to Boris Yeltsin and his team to realize.

However, let us not be rash in our assessment of Gorbachev. He is too wide-ranging a figure to give a hasty evaluation. Right now it is clear that Gorbachev, as a politican, does not fit into the framework of the 20th century alone. As always, history will dot all the i's.

Gorbachev Meets Yeltsin in Kremlin 23 Dec

LD2312132191 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1300 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Excerpt] At this moment, Boris Yeltsin and Mikhail Gorbachev are in the Kremlin discussing the outcome of the Alma-Ata summit as well as control over nuclear weapons. This was stated today at a news conference by Gennadiy Burbulis, first deputy Russian prime minister. [passage omitted]

Further on Meeting

LD2312120491 Hamburg DPA in German 1136 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow (DPA)—Russian President Boris Yeltsin and former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev met in the Moscow Kremlin on 23 December. This was reported by the INTERFAX news agency, which gave no further details. This is the first meeting of the two politicians following the resolutions at Alma-Ata, where, on 21 December, 11 republics wound up the USSR and founded the Community of Independent States.

According to INTERFAX, the republic presidents in the Kazakhstan capital sent Gorbachev a private message informing him of his removal from office. Gorbachev said in an interview on 22 December that he will support the Alma-Ata resolutions provided they lead to genuine political reforms.

INTERFAX also reported that the two chambers of the Soviet parliament will meet for their final session on 25 December. It is expected that the Supreme Soviet, following the demise of the USSR, will dissolve itself constitutionally.

Spokesman: Gorbachev To Resign

LD2312182491 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1800 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Text] The meeting between Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin is continuing in Moscow. Vladimir Tumarkin, Gorbachev's spokesman, told an AP correspondent that the transfer of the nuclear button to Russia is the main issue at the meeting. Gorbachev stated earlier that, since he is still commander in chief, the briefcase containing codes for launching nuclear missiles should remain in his hands. According to Tumarkin, Gorbachev will announce his resignation from the post of USSR president before Wednesday, 25 December.

Meanwhile, the INTERFAX agency reports that Boris Yeltsin has already given instructions regarding material provision for Gorbachev after he resigns. It is expected that decrees on eliminating the main governing structures of the former Union will be published today.

Moscow TV Interviews Shevardnadze on Role

LD2012224191 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 2105 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Interview with Eduard Amvrosiyevich Shevardnadze, minister of external relations of the USSR, by Aleksandr Lyubimov on 18 December; from the "Vzglyad" section of the "Vid" program—recorded]

[Text] [Lyubimov] Eduard Amvrosiyevich, exactly one year ago, on 20 December, you resigned and warned us of the forthcoming dictatorship. A year has gone by, and today quite a few political scientists are doubtful about the future of the new power.

[Shevardnadze] Everything now depends on them, on the leaders' energy. But the idea of a commonwealth has emerged somewhat—not to hurt the pride of the authors, initiators, and organizers—spontaneously. In other words, we have not prepared for it. I suppose there was no other way out, so to speak. This is probably the only way out of the present critical situation. Do you know where I, where we, made a mistake, a serious mistake? About two or three years ago, when everybody had agreed to a confederation and a commonwealth and a federation with certain elements, components of independence. I remember that initially the Baltic republics raised the issue of financial independence, or even finacial autonomy, rather pointedly. We lost a lot of time then to conclude a new agreement, a new treaty, so to speak, and to build new relations, completely new relations. At any rate, I am a realist, and one has to be a realist in politics. And bearing in mind the general mood in the republics, which I have an idea about, it is next to impossible to get anything else at the moment. The other matter is that one should try to do one's best to draw up such an agreement, such a treaty, which can provide at least minimum guarantees of security and stability on this vast territory and in all the states. And if you manage to achieve this, I am sure that it will be a step forward.

[Lyubimov] When you resigned a year ago, Gorbachev spoke quite sharply about your action. Nevertheless, you have now made a step in his direction and returned to this office. Why are you being so noble about it?

[Shevardnadze] When I made the decision to return to the ministry, I did not know that this question would arise. We all started from the fact that we had a draft treaty, agreed on at the session of the State Council. Well, the Ukraine had its own policy on this. And then a completely new situation arose. But when I now analyze the situation in the the country, I think that now there simply is no other solution. I did hope that I would be able to do something useful at this difficult stage for the kollektiv which I sincerely love and respect. But I don't know what—I haven't yet been able to do much. I do, nonetheless, propose preserving that kollektiv—be it a Russian one, or some other—but certainly it must be preserved, that national wealth and intellectual wealth. That is the first thing.

And the second is that I said I was in principle glad to have taken such a step, though many think it was a mistake. As far as any personal interests are concerned, of course it was a mistake. But, on the basis of the general situation and my principles by which I have always been guided, both in politics and in private life—moral principles—I did the right thing. I came at the most difficult time. At the congress of the Movement for Democratic Reforms, I said that I had left not at the worst time but came at the hardest and worst time. And I considered it my duty, in spite of the fact that I criticized Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev and criticized him thoroughly, after I resigned; I always have stressed that I remain his friend. I am glad that at this very difficult time for him—probably the hardest time in his life, his political and private life—I am at his side. It's a matter of principle, as it were, and I do not want to change that principle.

[Lyubimov] So, perhaps, it is worth now to retire from politics and wait for the moment when this time is over? This personal question arises: Excuse me, you are an elderly person, who over the last few years has spent an enormous part of his energy to form a more or less humane foreign policy. Now you sacrifice yourself when you have to get involved in the struggle which has no prospects so far, as it seems to me, and which now, obviously, will bring no results?

[Shevardnadze] Do you think this means being quixotic? I do not think so.

[Lyubimov] I do not know—I am asking.

[Shevardnadze] I do not think so. I still think that every reasonable politician who thinks realistically must give assistance to form this new community or commonwealth. So that it is not a formal formation, but a real formation. To assist in developing real integration processes. Without this, these processes are unavoidable. Unavoidable. And my mission, even if I would simply be retired and not in an association or a movement, I will still try to convince and speak in favor of integration on the basis of confidence, on the basis of full equality of rights, independence and so on and so forth. These are quite compatible processes.

[Lyubimov] I hope that we will drink champagne seeing in this new year with some optimism. Thank you very much.

Shevardnadze Interviewed on 'Gloomy' Forecast

LD2112020391 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 2100 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Interview with former USSR External Relations Minister Eduard Shevardnadze by correspondent Z. Guretskaya; place and date not given; from the "Vesti" newscast—recorded]

[Excerpts] [Guretskaya] Eduard Shevardnadze still has immense prestige both within the country and in the West. He is 63 years old, the age where a politician comes into his prime. What is his political prediction today, one year after his prophetic warning?

[Shevardnadze] Unfortunately, my forecast is gloomy. We must unite now, all of us. All the politicians must realize ultimately that the time has come now for less talk and declarations, that what we need now is practical action, practical decisions to defuse the situation, above all the economic situation, in some way, to enable every individual to feel that something is improving, that something is being done, that steps are being taken. If this does not happen, we will be confronted with very great unpleasantness, very great unpleasantness.

[Guretskaya] Yes.

[Shevardnadze] I don't know whether the military will get involved, whether military involvement will be needed if the people take to the streets, so to speak. I fear this more than anything else. Spontaneous unrest is the most terrible thing of all.

Shevardnadze on Commonwealth Process, Talks

LD2012134591 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1307 GMT 20 Dec 91

[By TASS diplomatic correspondent Georgiy Shmelev]

[Text] Moscow, 20 Dec (TASS)—Eduard Shevardnadze, the USSR minister of external relations, has voiced the hope that the process of shaping the Commonwealth of Independent States will be successful. In his opinion, the meeting of leaders of sovereign states, which opens in Alma-Ata on 21 December, will be crowned by the adoption of important decisions, which will also affect the sphere of foreign policy.

He was speaking at a session of the USSR Ministry of External Relations' Collegium held today, which considered issues connected with the implementation of the RSFSR president's decree signed on Wednesday,18 December, abolishing the ministry.

Eduard Shevardnadze briefed the Collegium on his discussions with Boris Yeltsin and other representatives of the Russian leadership. He said that he had formed the impression that Russia's leaders understood and valued highly the role and importance of a body such as the Ministry of External Relations and of the ministry's collective, as "a genuine part of the nation's wealth". Eduard Shevardnadze expressed confidence that when the transitional period is over a skeleton of the Ministry's collective "will find a place in the new structures of Russia".

As TASS has learned, a joint session of the collegia of the USSR Ministry of External Relations and the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs will be held on 23 December.

Diplomats Encouraged in New Role

OW2012172991 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1440 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] According to IF [INTERFAX] sources, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze does not intend to make any official statements before the end of the Alma-Ata talks between the leaders of the former Soviet republics. At the senior staff meeting today he abstained from commenting Boris Yeltsin's decree on disbanding the USSR foreign ministry and on placing its property in this country and abroad at the disposal of the foreign ministry of the Russian Federation.

A Soviet foreign ministry executive said that Mr. Shevardnadze had tried to encourage his colleagues. He expressed confidence that "the intellectual potential of the Soviet diplomats will not be wasted" and urged them to actively cooperate with colleagues from the Russian foreign ministry, saying that diplomacy lives on.

And yet, the foreign ministry official interviewed by IF had the impression that today's meeting was the last in the Soviet foreign ministry's history. [Moscow INTERFAX in English at 1600 GMT on 20 December carries a similar report and adds the following: "The opinion was shared by the head of the information department Vitaliy Churkin who told our correspondent that the meeting and E. Shevardnadze's address 'were in form and in essence a farewell ceremony.'"]

Creation of 'Gorbachev Foundation' Proposed

PM2312115691 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 23 Dec 91 p 1

[Untitled report from "PRAVDA, TASS, SNARK, URAL-AKTSEPT" column]

[Text] The editorial office has learned that it has been proposed that an M.S. Gorbachev Foundation be set up on the basis of the Sociopolitical Research Foundation. Similar foundations have been set up by M. Thatcher and other prominent figures in Western countries who have left large-scale politics. Offices are being prepared in a building on Leningradskiy Prospekt for Gorbachev and a number of staffers from his present apparatus.

Further on Gorbachev Fund

LD2312172891 Moscow TASS in English 1636 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow December 23 TASS—Mikhail Gorbachev found a new place to work, but has not yet taken the final decision, the newspaper "IZVESTIYA" reports in its evening Monday [23 December] edition. The daily claims the Soviet president will head "the Gorbachev fund," an organisation which Gorbachev himself instituted after his return from captivity in Foros last August.

The organisation is officially called the Fund for Social and Political Research and engages in political forecasts for the highest bodies of power. The latest research of the fund, which employs about 200 people, tried to predict the developments in the former Soviet Union after prices are released from state control. The forecast did not exclude the possibility of "a major social upheaval," the newspaper said.

Gorbachev has unofficially agreed to head the fund, Aleksandr Galkin, director of the Institute for Political Forecasts, which is a branch of the fund, told "IZVESTIYA."

The newspaper said former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and South Korean President No Tae-u, as well as other outstanding politicians have already agreed to join the fund.

Gorbachev Honors Poet-Musician With Award

LD2112212991 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1900 GMT 21 Dec 91

[From the "TV Inform" newscast presented by Sergey Medvedev]

[Text] Today we have received what is perhaps one of the last decrees of USSR President Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev. It has come about that on the day the Union has fallen apart, the poet, composer, and singer, Alla Borisovna Pugachev, has been awarded the honorary title of People's Artiste of the USSR. Alla Pugacheva is at this very moment taking part in a Christmas concert at the Olimpiyskiy sports complex.

Correction to Gorbachev Holds News Conference

LD1312162891

The following corrections pertain to the item headlined "Gorbachev Holds News Conference on Events," published in the 13 December Soviet Union DAILY REPORT, page 14:

Page fifteen, column two, third complete paragraph, sentence four, make read: ...the fact that they have declared that... (changing "we" to "they")

Page sixteen, column one, second complete paragraph, only sentence, to paragraph three, make read: ...reporter off screen] They knew, even the day before, what was going to happen. [new graf]

[Gorbachev] I already had foreseen this for myself. (clearing indistinct words; changing "observed" to "foreseen")

Page eighteen, column one, paragraph six, from end of sentence eighteen: ...a risky business. The rest would long ago have abandoned the whole cause. (rewording)

Commonwealth Affairs

Commentary Previews End of 'Gorbachev Era'

LD2012145791 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1300 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Peter Fil commentary; from the "Television News Service" program]

[Text] One of the most important stages in our country's history is coming to an end. Not infrequently it is called the Gorbachev era. Following the signing of the Commonwealth of Independent States agreement in Belorussia, which practically decided the Union's fate in advance, many people are asking if Mikhail Gorbachev has a political future.

[Fil] Tomorrow's meeting of the leaders of sovereign republics of the former Union will, in all probability, lead to a new geographical entity making its appearance on the geographical maps of the world. It will most likely be the Euro-Asian Commonwealth—several former republics of what has until recently been the USSR intend to join the trilateral alliance of the Slavic states. At the current stage there will be about 10 of them, according to Boris Yeltsin.

In effect, all this signifies the end of Mikhail Gorbachev's presidency and also a complete cessation of the activities of the Union center. In his letter to the Alma-Ata meeting participants, the USSR president noted the necessity of observing the constitutional order in the course of the new processes.

It is the view of political observers that Gorbachev will be remembered for having helped to put an end to the cold war, and for having returned to a great nation the right to speak freely. His loyalty to the party, which discredited itself in the eyes of a majority of the Soviet people, became Gorbachev's fatal mistake. However, Gorbachev's attempts to reform Communism only accelerated its demise, in the final analysis. Whatever the case, it is hardly possible to assert that Gorbachev will forever disappear from the political horizon. His experience and influence, which is still big enough, can help both in the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States and in various world processes. To give an example: Having ceased to be official leaders of their countries, both Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher still continue to play a noticeable role in the world.

Evidently the end of the Gorbachev era still does not signify the end of Gorbachev himself as a politician.

Leaders Preview Alma-Ata Meeting, Goals

RSFSR Adviser Interviewed

924B0152A Moscow KULTURA in Russian No 14, 14 Dec 91 pp 1, 8

[Interview with RSFSR State Adviser on Legal Policy S. Shakhray, by L. Kononova; place and date not given: "The Echo of Brest: The Process Is Moving..."]

[Text] **We asked RSFSR State Adviser on Legal Policy S. Shakhray to comment on the results of the Brest negotiations and appraise the significance of the documents adopted by the leaders of Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus.**

[Kononova] Sergey Mikhaylovich, it seems that the main question coming up in connection with signing the Agreement on the Creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States is as follows: Is it legal, does it not contradict legal, constitutional norms?

[Shakhray] To substantiate the legal aspect of the agreement, I want to emphasize three points.

First. The inarguable fact of the legal and de facto disintegration of the old USSR. The legal proof is that four of 15 former Union republics have not only proclaimed their independence, but have already received international recognition on the level of international law as independent states. In the overwhelming majority of other republics, unequivocal acts have been adopted that proclaimed their independence and the supremacy of the Constitution and laws of these republics over the laws of the former Union and nationalized the property of the formerly all-Union subordination. Kazakhstan and Russia adopted their resolutions on state sovereignty and put respective constitutional decisions through their parliaments, and later through general elections of their presidents. This is the legal side.

As to the de facto disintegration of the Union, each citizen of the former state feels its effect. Strictly speaking, only on the territory of the Russian Federation—or, to be more precise, only in Moscow—is dual power still preserved: that of the former all-Union organs and of the Russian republic organs. And it is these Union structures—the remaining ministries and the Committee for Operational Management of the Economy—which, by the way, has never been legally ratified, but nevertheless adopts some sort of decision and keeps spending million after million—that are completely paralyzing economic reforms and aggravate the crisis.

This is the first thesis. The second one flows logically from the first, and it starts with a question: Who had the right to formally acknowledge the fact of the legal and de facto disintegration of the Union. There are two versions of an answer to this question. The first version is: This fact can be acknowledged by the USSR Congress of People's Deputies. The second version: by the states that founded this Union.

But the USSR Congress of People's Deputies ceased to exist as the highest organ of state power on 5 September 1991, and this fact is reflected in the USSR Law of 5 September 1991 "On the USSR Organs of State Power and Administration USSR During the Transitional Period." Article 8 of this law contains a fundamental norm that the provisions of the old constitution are only in effect in that part which does not contradict this law. So, the provision in the constitution that the USSR Congress of People's Deputies is the highest organ of power in the Union directly contradicts Article 1 of this law, according to which the highest representative organ of power in the USSR is the USSR Supreme Soviet.

Thus, with the USSR Congress of People's Deputies constitutionally abolished, the right to decide—not to disband and not to liquidate the Union, I want to emphasize this, but to register its disintegration—was taken over by the three states that were the founders of this union in 1922 (there was actually a fourth founder—the Transcaucasian Federation, but it no longer exists as a state).

At this point, the question may arise: Have the republics not lost, from the moment they entered a Union, the right to make independent decisions; have they not lost their sovereign status? No. Both the 1924 constitution, and the constitutions of 1936 and 1977 contain a formula codifying the sovereignty of the republics and their right to secede from the Union. Thus, the sovereignty of the republics that comprise the Union is of primary nature, while the powers of the Union are a corollary to the former and are of a secondary nature. Looking at it from a formal point of view, Article 72 of the USSR Constitution by itself makes the decision of Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia legal.

The signing of the agreement also cannot be qualified as unconstitutional and illegal because it was signed by two presidents elected in general popular elections—of Russia and of Ukraine, and by the chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Belarus, elected by its highest organ of representative power. These are precisely the persons empowered by their peoples (and this authority is codified in the republic constitutions) to conduct negotiations, and enter international agreements and treaties. In addition, each side presented the signed document for ratification by their parliaments.

Thus, what we have is not just a legal thesis for the agreement reached in Minsk, but the fact that it is irreproachable from the constitutional point of view. This, of course, is not the entire significance of the signed documents. We, the citizens of the former USSR, citizens of Russia, must grasp their political, social, and economic aspect. Seriously speaking, the alternative to the Minsk agreement could be a bloody dictatorship, or a Yugoslav version of a struggle between brotherly peoples stemming from the division of property and borders disputes. It is also impossible to begin radical economic reforms when you do not know in what society, in what state you live, and whose army protects you.

And do notice—almost immediately after signing the agreement the republics sat down to work out an economic document and have achieved coordinated decisions both on the budget deficit and the issue of single currency—it remains the ruble—while the issue of national currencies will be decided on later, and on the coordination of price, tax, and customs policy. They affirmed the principle of inviolability of territorial integrity within the existing commonwealth and open borders. Of principal importance is Article 6 of the agreement that envisages a joint command in the preserved unitary strategic space with unified control over nuclear arms. Thus, the Minsk agreements were necessary, and it is our luck that the founders of the former Union decided not to withdraw into their national quarters but instead made an effort to create a new commonwealth, a community of a new type, which from the legal point of view represents a commonwealth of a confederative type. To be honest, the participants of the Minsk negotiations had a complete right to expect that their initiative would find greater understanding and support.

[Kononova] Understanding on whose part? The president of the country? But he in effect found himself removed from participation in the creation of the new commonwealth of states. Was it right to do so? Was it fair to him?

[Shakhray] You know, the question is not whether it was right or not to have Gorbachev participate, or whether it would have been better or not. The question is whether his participation was possible or not. We need to look for an answer from this angle. And then you will recall that Ukraine had declared categorically and unequivocally that it would not sign the Novo-Ogarevo agreement since the Ukraine representative had not participated in the State Council and it had not been possible to reach an agreement with him within the framework of the State Council. The president of the former Union had taken a no less categorical position by saying: either the Novo-Ogarevo process, or I resign. There was an obvious incompatibility of positions and approaches, and it was clear that it would not be possible to put them together at the negotiation table.

It is important to note that the RSFSR president had honestly fulfilled his obligations stemming from his agreement with the Union president and had tried sincerely to find a formula for Ukrainian participation in the Novo-Ogarevo union treaty. The idea was for Ukraine to join the union with limited powers for a certain period of time. However, after the referendum had been held in Ukraine, all these formulas turned out completely unacceptable for it. Meanwhile, a decision needed to be made. How many months can one spend trying to persuade one another and torpedoing economic reforms? The leaders of the three republic made that decision. But the door has not been slummed shut...

In essence, the agreement goes along exactly the same lines the USSR president had been advocating so persistently lately—the establishment of a new kind of tie between the sovereign states, the preservation of a political, legal, and economic space established over centuries—but on a new, voluntary, and democratic basis.

The USSR president still has a great opportunity to recognize the commonwealth, to congratulate it with finding a successful political formula, and to join in on the task of inviting other republics of the former Union to join the commonwealth.

[Kononova] About the other republics joining in... In the first announcements on the signing of the agreement it was emphasized that it had been signed by the Slavic republics. Thus, many perceived the commonwealth currently being created as an exclusively Slavic one...

[Shakhray] I categorically insist that the term Slavic is inapplicable in regard to this commonwealth. I even think that this definition had been circulated with the purpose of torpedoing the attempt to continue the forward moment in the agreement process.

This term does not reflect the real situation at all. Is the Russian multinational federation a purely Slavic state? The head of its entire legislative power, if you wish, is a Muslim and a Chechen by nationality.

But this is not the point. It was neither Slavic nor Orthodox principle that has served as a foundation for the agreement. The starting point was different—these three states formed this union; they bear the responsibility for it, and who else but them should have the task of acknowledging its disintegration and initiating a new commonwealth—a commonwealth that is open, I emphasize, for other republics. And other republics—Armenia, Estonia, Moldova, and Uzbekistan—have already shown interest in it.

I hope very much that the agreements already achieved will be codified, that all attempts to turn history back, to explode society from within will turn out fruitless. And that the mood of hope and a positive attitude will finally prevail over pessimism and lack of faith.

Shakhray on Defense Options

LD2112101391

[Editorial Report] Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian at 1658 GMT on 16 December carries an 11-minute edition of its "Our Expert Examination" program, including a recorded interview with S.M. Shakhray, RSFSR state advisor on legal affairs, by correspondent Oleg Ivanov. Date and place of interview not given.

Ivanov opens the interview by noting that the Ukrainian parliament has made some proposals on the Commonwealth of Independent States agreement and asks what the Russian parliament has done in this regard. Shakhray replies that the agreement's text has not been "broken" by either the Ukrainian or Russian sides, adding: "The Ukrainian Supreme Soviet has voted on several proposals to the agreement's text. This means that the head of state—the president of the Republic of Ukraine—will strive for agreement on these Ukrainian Supreme Soviet proposals with the Russian leadership, with the Belarussian leadership, and with the leadership of other republics—in the event of their joining this text—during future negotiations."

Shakhray enumerates the new Ukrainian proposals, adding: "Having received the official text, our delegation will work with these amendments and proposals. Some things will be adopted; a compromise will be reached in some places; some things will possibly be rejected at the given stage on the basis of free will and equality. The Russian Supreme Soviet has not voted on amendments to the text, proposals on the text. The only thing is that a norm of Article 11 of the agreement was put in specific terms in the ratification decision. The agreement simply gives a general formula that the acts of the USSR's bodies cease to be valid on the territories of Commonwealth member states. The Russian Federation has established that until the creation of conditions for the application of this norm, the acts of the bodies of the USSR not contradicting the Constitution of the Russian Federation and the legislation of the Russian Federation will be valid on just the territory of the Russian Federation."

Asked about military arrangements, Shakhray replies: "A special, very detailed agreement is being prepared very intensively on this question, precisely on Article 6, precisely on the control of strategic armed forces and on guarantees of unified control over nuclear weapons. Therefore, I will give my personal point of view at this juncture of what option there can be, what subject for discussion there can be here: Point six does not exclude an independent state in the Commonwealth from having its own national army, and Ukraine has this decision. Belarus may make such a decision. The Russian Federation may make such a decision. However, this does not contradict the principle enshrined in the Article 6. Why? Because there it is a matter of a unified command of strategic armed forces within the framework of a common space...."

Ivanov interrupts here to ask: "That is, not all armed forces, strategic ones?" Shakhray continues: "Of course. You have caught this demarcation very accurately, not all the armed forces. There should not be one commander of conventional weapons on the territory of these states. Therefore, a political council of defense or a security council of the heads of state could be organized. Moreover, during the first period—in my opinion, once again, this is my personal view—the president of the former USSR, who, according to the Union Constitution, was the commander in chief, will belong to this council. So, it would be a political council of defense or a security council. At the level of the coordination of conventional weapons, there must be a council of ministers of defense to which will belong the Belarussian defense minister, the Ukrainian defense minister, and the Russian defense minister, if Russia sets up such a ministry and introduces such a post. For the unified command of strategic armed forces, this political council, security council, can appoint a commander in chief of these forces and establish the procedure for the control, the unified control, over nuclear weapons. Here, there is complete agreement that nuclear weapons must not give at the seams, that control over nuclear weapons must be very strict, and that this geopolitical space will coincide with the unified strategic military space."

Shakhray then says that the basic principles of economic reform have been agreed between the three Slav states, citing the postponement of price deregulation as evidence of this.

At 1709 GMT, Shakhray concludes the interview by noting that: Ukraine has already started to supply food to the RSFSR, the Slav states have agreed to conduct a coordinated emissions policy and to coordinate customs policy, the RSFSR Government is taking advantage of the pause in economic reform to prepare a whole number of guarantees for pensioners and other unprotected strata of the population and documents to provide fuel during the winter, Yeltsin has signed a decree on a single economic zone within the Russian Federation to prevent obstacles to the movement of goods and finance, and everything is being done to soften the first blow of economic reform.

RSFSR's Filatov Notes Problems

LD2012195991 Moscow POSTFACTUM in English 1617 GMT 20 Dec 91

[From the "Politics" section]

[Text] The main thing is to prevent emergence of some new treaty in Alma-Ata, says First Deputy Chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Council Sergey Filatov on December 19. Sergey Filatov who represents in Alma-Ata the RSFSR Supreme Council also told PF [POSTFACTUM]: Of course there should be some continuity. Lawyers say that USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev must participate in this process. I also think that he must participate in the process of handing over international, military, strategic affairs...A lot depends on Gorbachev's position.

If he opposes the process, we can get bogged down. Or he will simply be discarded and that's all. This is also possible. After all, the republics can themselves resolve their problems. This was shown by Minsk and I think Alma-Ata will confirm it.

Filatov does not rule out the possibility of Gorbachev leading them by the nose and believes that one of the dangers for the Commonwealth of Independent States is a possibility of confrontation of two blocks in one Union—the Slavic and Muslim ones. In Alma-Ata, he thinks, it is important to show that the RSFSR is not a Slavic but a multinational republic where both factor are present.

According to Filatov, the Commonwealth should continue to have the State Council, the Interrepublican Economic Committee and a single strategic armed forces command. Among the complex questions of the Commonwealth formation Filatov named hassle over seats in the UN Security Council, as well as over embassies. In his words, if we could agree that these rights are delegated to the Russian Federation and the support by the seven leading countries of the world could be, this process would be easy, but if lawyers choose to strictly follow the letter of law it would be very difficult.

Nazarbayev, Shaposhnikov Comment

LD2012212691 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1900 GMT 20 Dec 91

[From the "TV Inform" Newscast]

[Excerpts] [P. Kasparov, TV-Inform announcer] The heads of the states which were part of the Soviet Union are going to Alma-Ata to discuss the prospects for the creation of a new Commonwealth of Independent States. It is expected that delegations from nine republics will arrive today: Ukraine, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Moldova, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenia, and Tajikistan. USSR Defense Minister Shaposhnikov's arrival in Alma-Ata also is expected today. Russian President Boris Yeltsin will fly to the capital of Kazakhstan from Rome the morning of 21 December. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent Gerasimov] The program of the Alma-Ata meeting is not known; however, it is evident that, in addition to the signing of the agreement on the Commonwealth, the topic of nuclear weapons must be set out as well. [video shows Nazarbayev on street opposite interviewer, facing camera]

[Nazarbayev] I hope that we will conclude a separate quadripartite agreement this time between Russia, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, and Belarus on this issue—which will dot all of the i's. [video shows archive pictures of missiles]

[Gerasimov] At the same time, the president of Kazakhstan denied assertions that the republic was maintaining strategic missiles on its territory to hold its former union colleagues in a single grouping. The issue of the leadership of the armed forces probably also will be resolved tomorrow. The USSR defense minister is in a strange position today. [video shows officials in army uniform, including Shaposhnikov, on airport tarmac]

[Unidentified correspondent] To whom is the defense minister subordinate?

[Shaposhnikov, laughing loudly] To the people.

[Gerasimov] In our state, at all times, all rulers have served the people—now it will be the peoples, each in its own way. How, we shall see. Mikhail Gorbachev has not flown to Alma-Ata.

[Kasparov] Our correspondent Aleksandr Gerasimov has just reported that a delegation from Georgia also has arrived in Alma- Ata, but it is not composed of the foremost individuals and the authority of this delegation at the meeting—expected on 21 December—is not known either.

Nazarbayev on Nuclear Accord

OW2012185691 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1705 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan told our correspondents that he hoped the Alma-Ata meeting "will make it possible to replace the former Union with something that works and gives our peoples no worries". He also said the four nuclear powers were planning to sign a mutual agreement in the course of the meeting.

Nazarbayev Spokesman on Georgia

OW2012210691 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2000 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev surmises that the meeting of heads of state tomorrow, December 21, in Alma-Ata will last not longer than 4 to 5 hours and will conclude with the signing of a Declaration on the proclamation of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and a Protocol on the Alma-Ata meeting. Nazarbayev's spokesman Seitkazy Matayev announced this to journalists.

With regard to the treaty on a defensive union, an "IF" [INTERFAX] correspondent reports that from conversations in lobby meetings, two variants exist: the document will be signed by the four atomic republics or all of the participants at the meeting in Alma-Ata.

At the briefing in Alma-Ata it as also announced that a delegation from Georgia will be at the meeting as observers.

It is still possible that Georgia will at one point join the Commonwealth of Independent States.

At the briefing it as also learned that Kazakh President Nazarbayev had signed an order on acknowledging the independence of all former Soviet republics.

Leaders Arrive for Alma-Ata Meeting, Comment

Nazarbayev Welcomes Leaders

LD2112021691 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 2100 GMT 20 Dec 91

[From the "Vesti" newscast—read by announcer Aleksandr Gurnov]

[Text] Nursultan Nazarbayev today welcomed the leaders of the sovereign states to his capital. All our republics, apart from the Baltic ones, will participate in the meeting. However, the status of the Georgian delegation, which is headed by the deputy speaker of parliament, is unclear. Asked whether Armenia intends to become a Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] cofounder, Levon Ter-Petrosyan gave a blunt reply: Why do you think I came here? The participants in the meeting promise to complete their deliberations by 1800 tomorrow and to brief journalists on their decisions.

This may be the USSR's death sentence. Mircea Snegur said in an interview in Alma-Ata that the meeting aims to form the CIS. However, Ukraine opposes transforming the CIS into a state entity; Kiev does not believe the Commonwealth should be a subject in international law. It holds that the decisions of coordinating structures and institutions within the Commonwealth should merely have the force of recommendations. In other words, this is not the replacement of the USSR by the CIS but the establishment of a community of completely independent countries, along the lines of the British Commonwealth or, rather, the EC. This seems to be the position toward which Yeltsin leans. He promised in Rome today to make every effort to ensure that the USSR, as such, ceases to exist.

However, the date for the complete transfer of power from the old Union to the new, interstate structures has not been decided. It is still too early to refer to the former USSR, as long as Gorbachev remains president at least. He wants a referendum and the Union parliament, which still hopes to hold another congress as the country's supreme legislative body, to have the last word.

However, there is yet another possible date for the country's symbolic end, namely 31 December or New Year's Eve. On that night, it is intended to lower the red flag over the Kremlin for the last time. This will be a symbolic act, generally speaking, but if the country's president and parliament allow this to happen, they too will have to depart from the scene.

Moldova's Snegur Arrives

LD2012194191 Moscow Central Television Vostok Program and Orbita Networks in Russian 1630 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Video report by correspondent Baymbetov from Alma-Ata on upcoming meeting of republic leaders, including interview with Moldovan President Mircea Snegur and Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev by Baymbetov; from the "TV Inform" newscast—recorded]

[Text] [Baymbetov] Over 400 Soviet and foreign journalists have already arrived in the capital of Kazakhstan. Dozens of the world's largest television companies have sent their film crews. No doubt this event, which affects the fates of numerous peoples and exerts influence on the development of the whole world process, is of immense interest. After all, a lot depends on the decision arrived at by the leaders of the 11 European and Asian republics.

Apart from the participants at the meetings in Minsk and Ashkhabad, the presidents of Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Moldova expressed their will to arrive in Alma-Ata. First, tackling the most important issue will take place—that is, together or separately.

Mircea Snegur, president of the Republic of Moldova, was the first to arrive in Alma-Ata. He was met by Nursultan Nazarbayev, president of the Republic of Kazakhstan.

You, Moldova, did not want to join the old Union, even with a small center. Could you tell us what attracts you now?

[Snegur] A structure with a center, with a centralized command, scheduled allocations and distributions, and so on is one thing, and a commonwealth of fully independent states that will allow us to coordinate our actions better is a completely different matter.

[Baymbetov] Could you please tell us whether you agree with the conditions set forth at the Ashkhabad meeting?

[Snegur] Well, let us wait for a little while. We will now study the final documents and then we will meet you once again.

[Nazarbayev] I look forward with optimism. I hope that common sense will win. Now, on the eve of going over to a market economy, we must be together. At first it will be a commonwealth and then it might be something more real. Within this commonwealth, I think, we will have coordinating bodies which will help all of us. [Video shows flags of former Soviet republics decorating a square in Alma-Ata; Snegur's arrival; him being met by Nazarbayev; Snegur and Nazarbayev replying to questions]

Further on Snegur's Remarks

LD2012190591 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1724 GMT 20 Dec 91

[By KAZTAG-TASS correspondent]

[Excerpt] Alma-Ata, 20 Dec (TASS)—The meeting of the heads of the sovereign republics, at which they are to discuss the problems of creating a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) on the territory of the former USSR, is to begin tomorrow in the capital of Kazakhstan.

Delegations headed by the presidents have been arriving in Alma-Ata today: Moldova—headed by Mircea Snegur; Azerbaijan—by Ayaz Mutalibov; Armenia—by Levon Ter-Petrosyan; Kyrgystan—by Askar Akayev; Tajikistan—by Rakhmon Nabiyev; Turkmenistan—by Saparmurad Niyazov; Uzbekistan—by Islam Karimov; and the Ukraine—by Leonid Kravchuk. The Belarus delegation is headed by Stanislav Shushkevich, the chairman of the Supreme Soviet.

"We want to become competent participants in this historic meeting, the aim of which is to form the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)," the Moldovan leader told journalists. "The new Commonwealth is set up so that the republics can coordinate their actions better among themselves. Moldova sees itself as a founder, among others, in it." [passage omitted]

Snegur on 'Equal' Participation

OW2012190891 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1705 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Speaking to our correspondents in the Alma-Ata airport President Mircea Snegur of Moldova that he had come as an equal participant in an historic meeting on the forming of a community of independent states.

"The new community," said President Snegur, "will be essentially different from the former Soviet Union. It will have no central authority issuing orders and giving assignments to members."

"It will be a community of independent states which have come together to improve their existence," he emphasised. "This is what seems so attractive to us."

President Snegur said he had not yet read the documents prepared for the meeting.

Ukraine's Kravchuk on Armed Forces

OW2012203791 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2000 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] President Levon Ter-Petrosyan, of Armenia, said upon his arrival in Alma-Ata, that he is firmly determined to put his signature to the treaty of a new commonwealth. "We have long sought a commonwealth whose members would be entirely independent, something the Novo-Ogarevo drafts lacked", Ter-Petrosian said. He believes that in founding a Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] there will be no more difficulties than there were at a time when all republics were members of the USSR. The Armenian president believes that in any case the CIS will give each republic full independence and a chance to prove its viability.

The Ukrainian president Leonid Kravchuk is certain that the conference will sign an important agreement on the armed forces in a new commonwealth. He said he didn't think that his becoming the commander-in-chief of the Ukrainian armed forces was a violation of the Minsk agreements. "In Minsk we discussed the strategic forces, and we are not changing our position in that respect", Kravchuk said.

President Rahmon Nabiyev, of Tajikistan, has said he is certain that a new union of independent states will take shape juridically on Saturday [21 December].

President Islam Karimov, of Uzbekistan, has told IF [INTERFAX] that he has arrived in Alma-Ata in a cheerful mood. He also noted the full confidence of the attitude of Kazakhstan and his own republic to all basic questions of forming a commonwealth.

First Deputy Prime Minister of Russia Gennadiy Burbulis, who has arrived from Kiev together with Kravchuk, expects the forthcoming talks to become a worthy continuation of the Minsk talks and the interests of states that would join the Commonwealth "voluntarily and sincerely" to be taken into account.

Burbulis believes that the question of who should be regarded as co-founders is of no fundamental importance. If agreement on joint actions will depend on it, it will be a quite acceptable form of a future treaty.

President Askar Akayev, of Kyrgyzstan, believes that a dramatic turn is taking place in the process of negotiations on a new Commonwealth of Independent States. He believes that the amendments to the Minsk treaty are not a problem that cannot be resolved. "All of us have common views on the basic issues. Everything else is of secondary importance", Akayev said.

President Ayaz Mutalibov, of Azerbaijan, has told IF that he has arrived in Alma-Ata with a positive attitude to the idea of a Commonwealth of Independent States. "We agree with the basic ideas of a future commonwealth", he added.

The chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Belarus Stanislav Shushkevich has said that the member-states of a future commonwealth have all reasons for living and working together. He said he was certain that ways of cooperation more effective than those which existed in the previous Union would be found.

Two senior Georgian officials are expected to arrive in Alma-Ata on Saturday in the capacity of observers.

Shaposhnikov on 'Complex' Problems

OW2012192291 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1705 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] USSR Defence Minister Marshal Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov and Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Yegor Gaydar believe that the Alma- Ata conference will not be an easy one.

Marshal Shaposhnikov has told IF [INTERFAX] that he has arrived in Alma-Ata to resolve the urgent problems of the armed forces within the framework of a new commonwealth. "These problems are complex but solvable", Marshal Shaposhnikov said. "In any case the army must serve no other than its people".

Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Yegor Gaydar has said that the participants in the conference are faced with a number of serious economic problems. However, he said that all the ten participants in the conference understood each other's interests, which would make them possible to agree on financial, credit and banking policies. [sentence as received] Russia's prime minister admitted that many of the solutions would be very sensitive, however, they brooked no delay.

'Constructive Spirit' Sought

LD2112071991 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 0600 GMT 21 Dec 91

[By unidentified KAZTAG correspondent]

[Text] Alma-Ata, 21 Dec (TASS)—RSFSR President Boris Yeltsin arrived in the Kazakh capital early this morning after his official visit to Italy. He was met at the airport by Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev and other leaders of the Republic. Immediately after his arrival, Boris Yeltsin held a brief news conference for Soviet and foreign journalists here to cover the meeting of the heads of the 11 sovereign states that will open in a few hours.

Delegations from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Ukraine, as well as USSR Defense Minister Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov, arrived in Alma-Ata yesterday.

The leaders and members of the delegations, in brief exchanges of opinions with those who met them and in short interviews given to representatives of mass media, pointed out not only the timeliness and actuality of such an open and, at the same time, principled conversation of equals but also expressed the readiness to conduct it in a constructive spirit.

The working day of the heads of the delegations will begin with their meeting behind closed doors at the Kazakh president's residence which is planned to last approximately two hours. Then the delegations will meet in full at the House of Frienship to discuss and sign the worked out documents. It is planned that a news conference will be held for the representatives of mass media at 1800 Alma-Ata time. The meeting is being covered by about 300 national and by more than 100 foreign correspondents.

Yeltsin Speaks on Arrival

LD2112091191 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 0709 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Report by special correspondents Lyudmila Semina and Aleksandr Ruvinskiy from Alma-Ata]

[Excerpt] [Semina] [passage omitted] Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin arrived in Alma-Ata at 0500 Moscow time. He was met by Nursultan Nazarbayev. Listen to this recording:

[Begin recording] [Yeltsin] We have all arrived in Alma-Ata in good spirits. They were saying there would be only 10 republics, and now there are 11. So it is practically a fait accompli. It looks as if we are going to reach a final agreement in Alma-Ata, and the historic Alma-Ata meeting will found the Commonwealth of Independent States. I have just returned from Italy where I spent two days. And there they regard it as a reality, and will now start focusing on this Commonwealth. Each state is an independent one but at the same time each state will tackle joint issues in coordination with the Commonwealth, especially the unified strategic armed forces.

The entire world community, including Europe, is worried about the unified control of nuclear weapons. The sitting of 12 ended in Brussels yesterday. They decided that help previously sent to the Soviet Union should be confirmed and it should be put in brackets: Bearing in mind the fact that each state has become independent, one should proceed from the fact that each state lies within the framework of this agreement. They also discussed the rendering of necessary aid for transforming to the market.

So the main point is that everything is going peacefully. It is very important. We respect Gorbachev, and we want him to resign peacefully in December, as he wishes to do himself. And accordingly, we will discuss with the heads of states today how to render all necessary homage to him. I think once he retires, we will allocate appropriate material, as it were, position, and benefits for him. This is received very well by the world community because not one leader of our state, since 1917, has resigned peacefully. They either went to their graves or most definitely were regarded as a criminal. In our civilized state I would have liked our leader, our country's president, who has done a great deal of good things and made a number of mistakes, to leave with dignity. And we will be constructing the Commonwealth of, to be exact, independent states, with a unified armed forces and everything will be controlled by a single leadership and a single button, and not by four buttons. I think we will agree upon this matter today.

[Nazarbayev] I had a phone call from Baker from Brussels yesterday. I confirm Boris Nikolayevich's words regarding the fact that the 12 states that met there are awaiting impatiently the results of the Alma-Ata meeting. They expect a positive result. I also told him what sort of documents we are preparing. I was told that humanitarian aid and support will be rendered, and this is received well by all those states. [end recording]

[Ruvinskiy] Nevertheless, let's not be over optimistic. The talks will be far from simple. People have already gathered at the House of Friendship, where talks are going to take place, to picket it. They are protesting against the agreement. Frankly speaking, there are just a few of them: representatives of the Kazakh Communist Party and the Alma-Ata department of All-Union Communist Party. [passage omitted]

Further on Yeltsin Statement

OW2112165991 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1507 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Excerpts] Russian President Boris Yeltsin stated during the visitto the capital of Kazakhstan on Saturday [21 December], that "the main thing is," Yeltsin noted, "that the transition from the USSR to the Commonwealth takes place peacefully, without bloodshed." [passage omitted]

In reply to a question by "IF" [INTERFAX] correspondents, on why the Novo-Ogarevo process [as received] continued for a year, but the Commonwealth was created in only a few days, Yeltsin underlined the fact that the former drafts on a Union "proceeded from a mistaken basis." They, he emphasized, allowed for the presence of a strong united center, "but this center is so repelling to all the republics, that nobody wanted to acknowledge it." "In the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] such a center, which could command every step of ours, does not exist and will not, that is why this appeals to all the republics," the Russian president stated.

According to information available to "IF" correspondents, a meeting beteen Yeltsin and President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev is also expected to take place Saturday. It is surmised that their topic of discussion will primarily be the problens relating to the defensive treaty of the Commonmealth. [passage omitted]

In addition to this, on Saturday around the building of the House of Friendship, where the agreement on the CIS was signed, a group of people from Alma-Ata gathered with posters saying: "Shame on the liquidators of the USSR!" "Alma-Ata is not the place for treacherous deals," "CIS is betraying the people".

Republic Leaders Begin Talks in Alma-Ata

LD2112084691 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 0735 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Alma-Ata, 21 Dec (TASS)—The presidents of eleven former Soviet republics began talks on the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] in the Kazakh capital of Alma-Ata at 1130 on Saturday, 21 December.

They are expected to adopt a declaration of independent states and an agreement on commonwealth institutions.

Among the participants in the meeting are Presidents Ayaz Mutalibov of Azerbaijan, Levon Ter-Petrosyan of Armenia, Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan, Askar Akayev of Kyrgyzstan, Mircea Snegur of Moldova, Boris Yeltsin of Russia, Rakhmon Nabiyev of Tajikistan, Saparamurad Niyazov of Turkmenistan, Islam Karimov of Uzbekistan, Leonid Kravchuk of Ukraine, and Chairman of the Belarussian parliament Stanislav Shushkevich.

The talks are also being attended by Georgian observers and Soviet Defense Minister Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov.

'Mutual Understanding' Reached

LD2112105291 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1024 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Alma-Ata, 21 Dec (TASS)—The morning meeting at the talks between the top leaders of the sovereign former republics in Alma-Ata lasted for three-and-a-half hours instead of the two that had been planned. According to information from reliable sources, mutual understanding has been achieved at the meeting.

A TASS correspondent discovered that the meeting in a broad group that was planned for the afternoon may not take place. Apparently, there is simply no need for it. Particularly because, contrary to the initial schedule, the members of the delegations took part in the morning meeting. Presently, the ceremony of signing final documents will begin.

Nazarbayev on Nuclear Weapons

LD2112204191 Moscow TASS in English 2023 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Alma-Ata December 21 TASS—Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, where nuclear weapons of the former Soviet Union are deployed, reiterated today at the Alma-Ata meeting their commitment to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the striving for the liquidation of all nuclear armaments.

Speaking at a news conference, held today by heads of the member states of the new Commonwealth, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev read the text of the agreement on joint measures to be taken by the above mentioned republics with regard to nuclear weapons. It will come into forth [as received] on the 30th day after the handing of all ratification instruments to the Russian Government for keep.

The document stresses that Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russia and Ukraine reaffirm their commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and to jointly work out their policy on nuclear problems.

The decision on the need to use nuclear weapons will be taken by the Russian president after coordinating it with heads of the states—signatories to the agreement, until nuclear weapons are fully eliminated on the territory of the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine.

According to the agreement, the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine pledge to join the 1968 Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as non-nuclear powers and to conclude a corresponding agreement on guarantees with the IAEA.

It is noteworthy that the provisions of the agreement do not rule out a possibility of the transportation of nuclear weapons from Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine to the territory of the Russian Federation for the purpose of their destruction.

The states—signatories to the agreement will promote the elimination of nuclear weapons. By July 1, 1992 Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine will ensure the transportation of nuclear weapons to the bases near specialised plants to be dismantled there under joint control.

The governments of the four republics pledge to submit the treaty on the Commonwealth of Independent States to their respective parliaments for ratification.

End of USSR Announced

OW2112163891 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1507 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] On December 21st at noon Moscow time behind closed doors the leaders of 11 sovereign states at a meeting in Alma-Ata reached agreement on ending the existence of the USSR. This was announced at a briefing by the Kazakh president's press spokesman, Seitkaziy Matayev.

It was also announced that 8 more republics of the former Union have joined as co-founders, including Moldova, to the agreement on the creation of a Commonwealth of Independent States, which was originally signed by Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. All former Union republics except for Georgia and the Baltic states have entered the Commonmealth.

An "IF" [INTERFAX] correspondent has learned that the question of Georgia's joining still remains open, as the Georgian representatives in Alma-Ata are not properly empowered to make such a decision.

It is expected that during the next two hours a protocol on the agreement of the heads of independent states will be signed, and also an Alma-Ata Declaration by the heads of 11 states.

With regard to the armed forces, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) is proposing that they temporarily be under CIS control, which will be active until December 30th. At this point the armed forces will be organized according to long term constant principles.

Further on Meeting Results

LD2112187491 Moscow POSTFACTUM in English 1441 21 Dec 91

[From the "Politics" section]

[Text] [No dateline as received] Ukraine offers Russia as UNO [United Nations Organization] legal successor of the USSR at independent states leaders' meeting in Alma-Ata.

According to Kazakh President's Press Secretary Seitkazy Matayev, a number of republics opposed the proposal. The consent was reached on the conditions that Russia, Belarus and Ukraine—UNO members at present—will promote a step-by-step entry to the UN Organization by other parties to the Commonwealth.

It was also agreed that Marshal Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov will temporarily act as commander of the joined armed forces, including strategic troops, till the December 30 meeting in Minsk. Ukraine and Azerbaijan which transferred troops located in their territories under republics' control, criticized the move. According to Matayev, it is most likely that the decision on joined armed forces will be adopted. He also believes that the nuclear weapons will be under a single command. The issue of nuclear button control has not been discussed at the meeting.

Gorbachev Informed of End of Presidency

LD2112121291 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1200 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] The leaders of the 11 sovereign republics that have formed the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] have adopted an address to USSR President Mikhail Gorbachev, in which they inform him of the cessation of the existence of the Soviet Union and of the institution of the USSR presidency. In the address, the heads of the independent states thank Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev for his great, positive contribution.

Participants Attend Document Signing Ceremony

Leaders Remark Before Signing

OW2112193791 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1822 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] "Interfax" [IF] correspondents in Alma-Ata report that president of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbayev spoke before the beginning of the signing ceremony of a package of documents on the new Commonwealth of Independent States on Saturday. He said that all the Novo-Ogarevo drafts and other documents on reforming the USSR had not been empty work. "For us it was a political, democratic and moral schooling," the Kazakh president emphasized. "For me personally," he said, "at times it seemed that the necessary formula for unity on an equal basis had finally been found. But life was continually introducing correctives, forcing us to search more and more thoroughly for the only reliable, possible variant, answering the objective realities."

Nazarbayev further noted that the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] succeeded in reaching an entirely new level of understanding of the contemporary tasks of a state structure and inter-state relations. In his opinion, the main achievement is that "we all together were able to avoid a fatal division on ethnic, religious and other indications, which from the beginning have carried confrontation and mistrust with themselves."

Nazarbayev especially emphasized that the step to meet each other taken by the 11 states was done without prompting from above, "without finger pointing by any authoritative uncle from the center."

The "IF" correspondents also reported that the head of the Belarussian parliament, Stanislav Shushkevich, before putting his signature on the documents, made a speech. He proposed that all states which signed the agreement strictly hold to the following principles:

1. Observe human rights set out in a general declaration of human rights and other similar documents.

2. Solve all existing contradictions and arguments exclusively by peaceful means and negotiations.

In conjunction with this, Shushkevich, in the name of the Belorussian delegation, proposed that membership in the Commonwealth of Independent States be maintained only by strictly observing the above principles.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin, who signed the document after the Belorussian delegation, gave his support to the proposal and suggested that it be made part of the protocol to the meeting in Alma-Ata.

The other heads of states signed the documents in silence.

Formation of Commonwealth Declared

LD2112134191 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1319 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Alma-Ata, 21 Dec (TASS)—The leaders of 11 former Soviet republics declared in Alma-Ata today the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

The document on setting up the Commonwealth was signed with the rights of cofounders by the top leaders of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Ukraine.

Thus, all the former republics of the USSR, apart from Georgia and the three Baltic republics, have become members of the Commonwealth. Georgia, which took part in the Alma-Ata meeting as an observer, intends to determine its attitude to the Commonwealth later.

Other documents were also signed.

Further on Documents Signed

LD2112224191 Moscow POSTFACTUM in English 1821 GMT 21 Dec 91

[From the "Politics" section]

[Text] The Alma-Ata summit of Independent States adopted concluding documents the summit adopted the following documents: - Protocol of the Meeting of Heads of Independent States—resolution of the Council of Heads of Participant States of the Commonwealth of Independent States—Protocol to the Accord on the Establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States, Signed on December 8, 1991 in Minsk by the Belarus Republic, the Russian Federation, the Ukraine— Accord on Coordinating Institutions of the Commonwealth of Independent States—Accord on Joint Measures With Regard to Nuclear Weapons—Alma-Ata Declaration.

The Alma-Ata declaration declares that coordination of activities among participants of the Commonwealth shall be achieved on the principle of equality through coordinating institutions formed on a parity basis and acting in accordance with procedures to be determined by agreements between members of the Commonwealth which shall be neither a state nor a supra-state formation.

In order to attain international strategic stability and security, shall be preserved the joint command of military strategic forces and joint control over nuclear weapons. The sides shall respect each other's aspirations towards receiving a status of a nuclear-free and/or neutral state. The Commonwealth of Independent States shall be open, with consent of all its participants, for the joining of states-members of the former Union of SSR [Soviet Socialist Republic], as well as other states sharing the goals and principles of the Commonwealth.

The Alma-Ata declaration affirms adherence to cooperation in the formation and development of a common economic space, common European and Eurasian markets. With the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall cease its existence. States-participants of the Commonwealth shall guarantee, in accordance with their constitutional procedures, enforcement of international obligations stemming from treaties and agreements signed by the former Union of SSR.

States-participants of the Commonwealth shall commit themselves to a strict compliance with the principles of this declaration. In accordance with the accord on joint measures with regard to nuclear weapons, states-participants of the accord affirm their obligation to refrain from being the first in using nuclear weapons and shall jointly work out policies on nuclear matters. Until a full liquidation of nuclear weapons in the territories of the Belarus Republic and the Ukraine, decisions on its use shall be made by the RSFSR president in coordination with the heads of states-participants of the accord in accordance with procedures to be worked out jointly by the participant states.

Under the protocol of the meeting of heads of independent states, until the settlement of the issue of reforming the armed forces, Marshal Shaposhnikov shall be instructed to command the armed forces.

The resolution of the Council of Heads of Participant States of the Commonwealth of Independent States says that participant states of the Commonwealth shall support Russia's continued membership in the UN, including its status of a permanent member of the Security Council. The Belarus Republic, RSFSR and the Ukraine shall support other states of the Commonwealth in settling the issue of their full membership in the UN and other international organizations.

The accord on coordinating institutions of the Commonwealth of Independent States envisages establishment of the supreme body of the Commonwealth—the Council of Heads of States, as well as the Council of Heads of Governments.

The documents have been signed by heads of independent states.

'Text' of Formation Protocol

LD2112173491 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1705 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Alma-Ata, 21 Dec (TASS)—Here follows the text of the protocol signed here today to the agreement on the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States, signed 8 December 1991 in Minsk by the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Federation (RSFSR), and the Ukraine:

The Azerbaijan Republic, the Armenian Republic, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation (RSFSR), the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ukraine are forming a Commonwealth of Independent States on principles of equality and as high contracting parties.

The agreement on the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States becomes valid for each of the high contracting parties from the moment of its ratification.

On the basis of the agreement setting up the Commonwealth of Independent States and taking into account the conditions made during its ratification, documents will be drawn up which will regulate cooperation within the Commonwealth.

The present protocol is an integral part of the agreement setting up the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Concluded in Alma-Ata on 21 December 1991 in a single copy in the Azeri, Armenian, Belorussian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Moldovan, Russian, Tajik, Turkmen, Uzbek and Ukrainian languages. All the texts carry equal validity. The original copy is preserved in the archives of the government of the Republic of Belarus, which will send to the high parties to the agreement certified copies of the present protocol.

For the Azerbaijan Republic	A. Mutalibov
For the Republic of Armenia	L. Ter-Petrosyan
For the Republic of Belarus	S. Shushkevich
For the Republic of Kazakhstan	N. Nazarbayev
For the Republic of Kyrgyzstan	A. Akayev
For the Republic of Moldova	M. Snegur
For the Russian Federation (RSFSR)	B. Yeltsin
For the Republic of Tajikistan	R. Nabiyev
For Turkmenistan	S. Niyazov
For the Republic of Uzbekistan	I. Karimov
For the Ukraine	L. Kravchuk

[Signed in] Alma-Ata, 21 December 1991

'Text' of Alma-Ata Declaration

LD2112204491 Moscow TASS in English 2036 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Alma-Ata December 21 TASS—Follows the text of the Alma-Ata declaration, signed by the heads of the 11 states here today:

"The independent states—

The Azerbaijani Republic, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Kyrgyzia, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan and Ukraine,

Seeking to build democratic law-governed states, the relations between which will develop on the basis of mutual recognition and respect for state sovereignty and sovereign equality, the inalienable right to self-determination, principles of equality and non-interference in the internal affairs, the rejection of the use of force, the threat of force and economic and any other methods of pressure, a peaceful settlement of disputes, respect for human rights and freedoms, including the rights of national minorities, a conscientious fulfillment of commitments and other generally recognised principles and standards of international law,

Recognising and respecting each other's territorial integrity and the inviolability of the existing borders,

Believing that the strengthening of the relations of friendship, good neighbourliness and mutually advantageous cooperation, which has deep historic roots, meets the basic interests of nations and promotes the cause of peace and security,

Being aware of their responsibility for the preservation of civilian peace and inter-ethnic accord,

Being loyal to the objectives and principles of the agreement on the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States,

Are making the following statement:

Cooperation between members of the Commonwealth will be carried out in accordance with the principle of equality through coordinating institutions formed on a parity basis and operating in the way established by the agreements between members of the Commonwealth, which is neither a state, nor a super-state structure.

In order to ensure international strategic stability and security, allied command [Moscow PRAVDA in Russian on 23 December 1991 carries in its First Edition on page 1 the "Alma-Ata Declaration" and renders this phrase as: "...stability and security, joint [obyedinennoye] command of the..."] of the military-strategic forces and a single control over nuclear weapons will be preserved, the sides will respect each other's desire to attain the status of a non- nuclear and (or) neutral state.

The Commonwealth of Independent States is open, with the agreement of all its participants, to the states—members of the former Soviet Union, as well as other states sharing the goals and principles of the Commonwealth, which may join it.

The allegiance to cooperation in the formation and development of the common economic space, and all-European and Eurasian markets is being confirmed.

With the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republics ceases to exist.

Member states of the Commonwealth guarantee, in accordance with their constitutional procedures, the fulfillment of international obligations, stemming from the treaties and agreements of the former USSR.

Member states of the Commonwealth pledge to observe strictly the principles of this declaration.

For the Azerbaijani Republic—A. Mutalibov
For the Republic of Armenia—L. Ter-Petrosyan
For the Republic of Belarus—S. Shushkevich
For the Republic of Kazakhstan—N. Nazarbayev
For the Republic of Kyrgyzia—A. Akayev
For the Republic of Moldova—M. Snegur
For the Russian Federation—B. Yeltsin
For the Republic of Tajikistan—R. Nabiyev
For Turkmenistan—S. Niyazov
For the Republic of Uzbekistan—I. Karimov
For Ukraine—L. Kravchuk [Signed in] Alma-Ata, December 21, 1991".

Nuclear Agreement Signed

CM2315049I Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 23 Dec 91 p 2

["Agreement on Joint Measures on Nuclear Weapons"]

[Text] Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and the Ukraine, called henceforth member states, confirming their adherence to the nonproliferation of nuclear armaments, striving for the elimination of all nuclear armaments, and wishing to act to strengthen international stability, have agreed on the following:

Article 1. The nuclear armaments which are part of the joint [obyedinennykh] strategic armed forces ensure the collective security of all members of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Article 2. The members states of the present agreement confirm the obligation not to be the first to use nuclear weapons.

Article 3. The member states of the present agreement are jointly drawing up a policy on nuclear matters.

Article 4. Until nuclear weapons have been completely eliminated on the territory of the Republic of Belarus and the Ukraine, decisions on the need to use them are taken, by agreement with the heads of the member states of the agreement, by the RSFSR president, on the basis of procedures drawn up jointly by the member states.

Article 5.

1. The Republic of Belarus and the Ukraine undertake to join the 1968 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty as non-nuclear states and to conclude with the International Atomic Energy Agency the appropriate agreements-guarantees.

2. The member states of the present agreement undertake not to transfer to anyone nuclear weapons or other explosive devices [yadernyye vzryvnyye ustroystva] and technologies, or control over such nuclear and explosive devices, either directly or indirectly; and equally not in any way to help, encourage, or prompt any state not possessing nuclear weapons or to acquire by any other

means nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, and also control over such weapons or explosive devices.

3. The provisions of Paragraph 2 of this article do not stand in the way of transferring nuclear weapons from Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine to RSFSR territory with a view to destroying them.

Article 6. The member states of this agreement, in accordance with the international treaty, will assist in the eliminating of nuclear weapons. By July 1, 1992 Belarus, Kazakhstan and Ukraine will ensure the withdrawal of tactical nuclear weapons to central factory premises for dismantling under joint supervision.

Article 7. The Governments of Belarus, Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation and the Ukraine undertake to submit a treaty on strategic offensive arms for ratification to the Supreme Soviets of their states.

Article 8. The present agreement requires ratification. It will come into force on the 30th day after the handing over of all ratification papers to the Government of the RSFSR for safe keeping.

Done in Alma-Ata in one certified copy in Belarussian, Kazakh, Russian and the Ukrainian languages, all texts being equally authentic.

[signed] For Belarus, S. Shushkevich;
For Kazakhstan, N. Nazarbayev;
For the Russian Federation, B. Yeltsin;
For Ukraine, L. Kravchuk.

Protocol on Shaposhnikov Role

PM2312113491 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 23 Dec 91 p 2

[Unsigned, undated "Protocol of the Conference of Heads of Independent States," under the general heading "We Have a Commonwealth of Presidents. Will We Have a Commonwealth of Peoples?"]

[Text] On the basis of the provision enshrined in the Agreement on the Creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States and in the Alma-Ata Declaration on maintaining under joint [obyedinennyy] command the common military-strategic space and unified [yedinyy] control of nuclear weapons, the High Contracting Parties agreed on the following:

Until the question of reforming the Armed Forces is resolved, the command of the Armed Forces is entrusted to Marshal Ye.I. Shaposhnikov.

Proposals on this matter are to be submitted by 30 December 1991 for consideration by the heads of state.

Shaposhnikov Remarks on Forces

LD2312040191 Moscow All-Union Radio First Program Radio-1 Network in Russian 1700 GMT 22 Dec 91

[From the "New Wave" program]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] Marshal Shaposhnikov assesses the Alma-Ata agreement positively. The main thing that satisfies me, he told an RIA correspondent, is that the strategic armed forces remain under single control. [passage omitted]

Coordination Institutions Agreement

PM2312112091 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 23 Dec 91 p 2

[Unsigned, undated "Agreement on Coordination Institutions of the Commonwealth of Independent States," under the general heading "We Have a Commonwealth of Presidents. Will We Have a Commonwealth of Peoples?"]

[Text] 1. In order to resolve questions relating to coordination of the activity of the Commonwealth states in the sphere of common interests, the Commonwealth's highest organ is to be set up—the "Council of Heads of State," and also the "Council of Heads of Government."

2. Plenipotentiary representatives of the Commonwealth states are instructed by 30 December 1991 to submit for examination by the Council of Heads of State proposals on the abolition of the structures of the former USSR, and also on the Commonwealth's coordination institutions.

Draft Agreement on Institutions

OW2112173291 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1507 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The main political institution of the Commonwealth of Independent States is a conference of the heads of governnent and state, says the draft agreement on the institutions on the Commonwealth of Independent States.

At their conferences the heads of government and state will adopt fundamental documents of the Commonwealth and make, if necessary, ammendments and addenda to its constituent acts. The leaders of independent state will gather for a conference at least twice a year. Extraordinary conferences can be convened at the request of a member of the Commonwealth. The heads of government and state will preside over such conferences by turns in the alphabetical order of the names of the member states in Russian.

The institutions taking practical decisions to coordinate activity in corresponding areas are ministerial committees of the member states.

Signatories to the present agreement institute the following ministerial committees:

—on foreign affairs;
—on defense (a unified command of strategic forces will be subordinate to the committee);
—on economics and finances;
—on transport and communications;
—on social security;
—on internal affairs

The committees of ministers will hold sessions at least 4 times a year.

The main day-to-day working institution is the committee of ambassadors from the member states. The committee of ambassadors will ensure political coordination and cooperation in between sessions held by the two above-mentioned institutions.

Every member state will be represented in the institutions formed by the Commonwealth.

Expenses connected with financing the work of the Commonwealth institutions will be divided betmeen the member states in accordance with the agreement on dividing expenditure to be adopted by the Commonwealth.

The member states will also sign an agreement on the site that will house the Commonwealth's institutions.

'Text' of UN Resolution

LD2112170491 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1612 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Alma-Ata, 21 Dec (TASS)—Here follows the text of a resolution of the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] Council of Heads of State:

"The states participating in the Commonwealth, citing Article 12 of the agreement on the creation of the CIS and proceeding from the intention of every state to fulfill its obligations according to the UN Charter and participate in the work of this organization as full and equal members [Moscow PRAVDA in Russian on 23 December 1991 carries in its First Edition on page 2 a "Decision of the Council of Heads of State of the Commonwealth of Independent States" and renders this phrase as: "...organization as full [polnopravnykh] members, and taking...], and taking into account that the Republic of Belarus, the USSR and Ukraine were original members of the UN, and expressing satisfaction with the fact that the Republic of Belarus and Ukraine are continuing to participate in the UN as sovereign independent states, and being filled with resolve to cooperate in strengthening international peace and security on the basis of the UN Charter in the interests of their peoples and the whole international community, have resolved:

1. The Commonwealth states support Russia in continuing the USSR's UN membership, including its permanent membership in the Security Council and other international organizations.

2. The Republic of Belarus, the RSFSR, and the Ukraine will give the other Commonwealth states support in resolving the questions of their full and equal membership [PRAVDA renders this phrase as: "...of their full membership of the..."] of the United Nations and other international organizations.

Concluded in the city of Alma-Ata on 21 December 1991 in a single copy in Azeri, Armenian, Belarussian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Moldovan, Russian, Tajik, Turkmen, Uzbek and Ukrainian languages. All the texts carry equal validity. The authentic copy is kept in the archives of the government of the Republic of Belarus, which will send to the high contracting parties a certfied copy of the present protocol.

For the Azerbaijan Republic A. Mutalibov
For the Republic of Armenia L. Ter-Petrosyan
For the Republic of Belarus S. Shushkevich
For the Republic of Kazakhstan N. Nazarbayev
For the Republic of Kyrgyzstan A. Akayev
For the Republic of Moldova M. Snegur
For the RSFSR B. Yeltsin
For the Republic of Tajikistan R. Nabiyev
For Turkmenistan S. Niyazov
For the Republic of Uzbekistan I. Karimov
For Ukraine L. Kravchuk [Signed in] Alma-Ata,
21 December 1991

Leaders Comment on Documents

LD2312035591

[Editorial Report] Moscow Central Television Vostok Program and Orbita Networks in Russian at 1630 GMT on 22 December, during its regularly scheduled "TV Inform" newscast, carries the following series of video recorded comments by Commonwealth of Independent States officials on the Commonwealth and on the signing of Commonwealth documents in Alma-Ata on 21 December. Dates and places of comments not given.

Gennadiy Burbulis, RSFSR first vice prime minister: "All doubts over certain improper actions having been perpetrated in Minsk have been rejected. We are convinced that the only way out of the stalemate in which our states have found themselves over the past 18 months has been found."

Vyacheslav Frantsevich Kebich, Belarus Council of Ministers chairman: "I think we will move toward the type of commonwealth created in Europe today."

Leonid Makarovich Kravchuk, Ukrainian president: "The world will long study and, without exaggeration, take comfort from that decision and those which we have adopted."

Saparmurad Atayevich Niyazov, Turkmen president: "It seems to us that, having set up the Commonwealth, no one can now place their hopes in anyone making decisions for anyone else. The act has taken place. Each state must tackle its political, economic, social, and cultural issues in a sovereign and independent manner. However, all efforts in this Commonwealth are being coordinated to speed things up, so the creation of the Commonwealth must be viewed not as the creation of a new state but...[changes thought] I repeat that this is a Commonwealth for coordinating efforts to tackle common issues."

Islam Abduganiyevich Karimov, Uzbek president: "Each Republic now tackles its own issues independently, considering the specifics, considering everyone's interests, I repeat, everyone living on the territory of the Republics, irrespective of nationality, irrespective of creed, irrespective of social standing. Each republic tackles its own issues independently, at the same time being aware that there are thousands of problems which must be resolved together. These issues will now be resolved without commands and a center. They will be tackled jointly on so-called mutually advantageous terms."

News Conference Held

LD2112140591 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1300 GMT 21 Dec 91

[News conference by Commonwealth of Independent States, CIS, heads of state at CIS founding summit in Alma-Ata attended by Azerbaijan President Ayaz Mutalibov, Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan, Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev, Kyrgyzstan President Askar Akayev, Moldovan President Mircea Snegur, Russian President Boris Yeltsin, Tajikistan President Rakhmon Nabiyev, Turkmenistan President Saparamurad Niyazov, Uzbekistan President Islam Karimov, Ukraine President Leonid Kravchuk, Belarus President Stanislav Shushkevich and USSR Defense Minister Yevgeniy Shaposhnikov; broadcast in progress—live]

[Text] [Nazarbayev] [Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian at 1400 GMT on 21 December carries a recording of this news conference and adds the the following opening remarks by Nazarbayev, which are not included in this live television version: "The protocol of the agreement on creating the Commonwealth of Independent States was signed on 8 December, 1991, in Minsk by the representative of Belarus, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine. You can read it in the press. It will be published. Eleven republics, Azerbaijian, Armenia,..."] ...Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus [as heard], Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenia, Tajikistan—I already said Tajikistan. Eleven republics have signed this protocol by which we, under conditions of equal rights, are forming the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS].

The second document is called the Alma-Ata declaration. On the whole it supports the general principles adopted by the Minsk meeting and agreement, and says that the reservations and observations of the other states will be taken into account during the process of ratifying these documents, after which the documents will come into effect.

The third document is the protocol of the meeting of the heads of independent states, a military agreement in which we determine the succession of the military leadership for a transition period until the reform of the structure of our country's military organizations, and determine the succession and the commander in chief of these troops.

The fourth agreement is on the coordinating institutions of the CIS, in which we jointly create for this period a council of heads of states as the supreme body coordinating the interests of the CIS, and a council of governments for deciding social and economic issues.

Fifth is a statement on the legal succession as regards the rights and obligations of the former USSR according to the UN Charter. Taking into account the situation that is taking shape just now in the Soviet Union, and so that our interests are represented in the United Nations and the Security Council, we have unanimously decided to request that this place be given on our behalf to Russia. Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, who are today members of the United Nations, will do everything so that all members of the CIS become full UN members, about which we appeal to the entire world community.

The final agreement was signed by the republics on whose territories nuclear weapons are situated. This agreement is called: Agreement on Joint Measures Regarding Nuclear Weapons.

I think that this document puts an end to all the issues and questions about which we are constantly asked. It means that the unity of control over strategic weapons, and specifically nuclear weapons, has been finally determined by us. These are the most important documents that have been signed so far, and we have agreed that the next most urgent issues will be discussed in Minsk on 30 December by the heads of the states that are present here.

Here I would like to end my introductory speech, and I would like to say that simultaneous translation into English and Kazakh is available in this hall. Due to a limited amount of time, dear friends, we will allow no more than 40 minutes for this news conference. Please, ask your questions."

[Unidentified correspondent] I have a question for esteemed President Leonid Kravchuk. [sentence indistinct] I have also a question to Armenia, to the esteemed President Ter-Petrosyan. Would you please tell us the political aspects that are connected with the protection of individual interests and rights? Will they be reflected in the political course which Armenia is choosing now?

Obviously, this is also a question for the representative of the Moldavian leadership, President Snegur. A very interesting point has been made by the president of Belarus.

[Kravchuk] I was asked a question about a single cultural space. I am convinced the creation of a single cultural space won't be expedient. Just as any other spiritual sphere, it is an objective process. In other words, peoples and nations exchange their cultural values regardless of whether someone is setting up an organizational framework for it.

Fundamentally, any culture is a national thing. We have no intention to divide up—as has been said here—books, funds, and museums. But we adhere to the position that sacred objects and relics must belong to those peoples whose sacred objects they are. Bearing this goal in mind, we have decided to set up a commission that, in accordance with our joint proposal, will be headed by Culture Minister Nikolay Nikolayevich Gubenko. It will set forth specific proposals in order to resolve all issues connected with the precise and clear understanding of cultural values, including those belonging to museums, archives, and of those values that, I repeat, are the relics, spiritual relics, of every nation and all peoples.

[Ter-Petrosyan] I was asked a question that, in my opinion,, has very little to do with Armenia because violations of individual's rights, human rights, and national minorities' rights have not been observed in Armenia.

[Snegur] This question was also addressed to me. I would like correspondents and all those who are watching us to know that after the adoption of the declaration on its sovereignty a year ago, Moldova joined all international declarations on human rights. As far as I can see, unfortunately, individual misunderstandings take place in the republic, but they are not linked to human rights violations. Numerous delegations we have invited from the Russian Federation, Ukraine, and Belarus testify to this. For example, a Ukranian delegation is leaving today. A Russian delegation will arrive tomorrow. We were recently visited by a group from Helsinki, which visited literally all the regions of the most acute tension. They did not uncover any cases of human rights violations either.

But you are right in saying that this declaration, which was prepared by Mr. Shushkevich, and—as it was stated in the documents adopted today—should again confirm, once and for all, that there should not be any misunderstandings in people's thoughts and specific actions.

[Nazarbayev, indicating correspondent] Over to you. I will do it this way around.

[NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA correspondent] NEZAVISIMAYA GAZETA. Nursultan Abishevich, let me address this question to you as the host of this meeting. Just a very general question. How was your work today? What caused the most argument? What was the subject of the most acute and wide discussions? Or, maybe there was nothing like that? How do you assess the results on the whole? Thank you.

[Nazarbayev] Insofar as we are tackling the issues of the fate of the people occupying one part of the Earth, and insofar as these are historic times, then without doubt it has been impossible to reach agreement easily on these problems. It is not by chance that in my introductory speech I told you that from 8 December until today intensive work has been going on. You will recall that at the Ashkhabad meeting and the Minsk meeting, our experts (?analyzed), made their observations, discussed this, and voiced their different views and thoughts. We would like to thank all of our experts and aides who have done such a lot of work. Last night, they worked on preparing these documents until three in the morning. If you bear in mind that from 1030 until now, we have been working on all of these documents, then you will realize that it has not been easy. But I must say that the results of all our work are deeply satisfying to me personally. Next question please.

[Mortazar] Stepan Mortazar, [word indistinct] of Kazakhstan. Esteemed Boris Nikolayevich, I have one question for you. In the last few days, the Kazakhstan Supreme Soviet has adopted a statement regarding Gorbachev's utterances on the fact that during the years when the virgin lands were being brought under cultivation, five Russian oblasts were supposedly handed over to Kazakhstan. To date there has been no reply to this statement. I would like to ask you how you view what Gorbachev said, and do you share his views? Thank you.

[Yeltsin] As far as Gorbachev is concerned, in view of what so far is his verbal statement on resigning in the very near future, we discussed this question today. The heads of states of the Commonwealth have passed appropriate decisions on the subject. We respect Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev. We do not want to follow the tradition that took shape after 1917 of burying each head and leader of the state, and subsequently reburying him or regarding him as a criminal. In a civilized state, that tradition must cease to exist. Therefore, we have passed decisions on questions concerning his situation, in financial and other aspects, and regarding his back-up for the period following his resignation.

As to Russia and everything that deals with ethnic problems, first I must say this: Despite the fact that there are 130 nationalities and ethnic groups in Russia, there has still not been any bloodshed on ethnic grounds on Russian territory during the entire period of these dark times. Of course, we recognize the sovereignty of our republics, which are part of the RSFSR. Appropriate treaties will be signed and are under discussion now. The Government of the RSFSR will sign them with each republic. But all this will be taking place, first, in a peaceful way, and second, by observing the absolute sovereignty of each republic. I do not think we will have any kind of argument. I am sure of that. Rather intensive talks are being held, including those with Tatarstan. A treaty between the Russian Government and Tatarstan will be signed. All so far remain part of Russia. No one has talked about seceding from the Russian Federation.

[AFP correspondent] AGENCE FRANCE PRESS news agency. If you postponed until 30 December the final questions...

[Nazarbayev, interrupting] Who are you asking this question?

[AFP correspondent] You, I think. Four republics have nuclear weapons. Does this mean that there will be a treaty on this issue between these republics on 30 December? What have you agreed on today with regard to nuclear weapons?

[Nazarbayev] This is a very important issue. I would ask my aides to bring the text of this agreement and I will read it.

[Yeltsin] It is important for the entire world.

[Nazarbayev] Could you bring the document we approved today? Could you bring the draft agreement?

[Kravchuk] It has not been suspended. We passed it today.

[Nazarbayev] We have signed it.

[Askhabad television correspondent] Askhabad television. A question to Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin. A few days ago Central Television came under RSFSR jurisdiction. Now independent states of the former Union see two practically Russian channels. In this connection, the question is: Is a reciprocal process proposed, that is, creation of a single television and radio broadcasting system? If it is proposed, then by whom? How it will be financed? Thank you.

[Yeltsin] The first is that our Central Television has been orphaned without having Union structures and without knowing to whom to go every day to agree on texts of their programs. By a decree of the president of the Russian Federation, television came under Russian jurisdiction. At the same time, the first channel was called a state channel. It is a channel of interstate communication and television.

[Ismailov] [words indistinct] at your discretion, let somebody answer this. This is Kazakhstan, Ismailov. It is already being reported that Jacques Delors, president of the commission of the European Community, is saying that a voluntary economic Commonwealth of Independent States will not work for the union, and that you need supranational bodies, not only to coordinate, but to regulate. What are the future prospects of our Commonwealth in this context?

[Nazarbayev] Leonid Makarovich.

[Unidentified speaker] Do you expect such a danger here?

[Kravchuk] The point is that whoever talks about us and whatever he says, we have to tackle issues here, independently. Assessments will be made only by the Council of States. We shall look at the real results. In the meantime, I feel that since our Commonwealth is only two weeks old, any declarations concerning the results of our work are both premature and, what is more, politically inappropriate.

[Nazarbayev] Go ahead.

[Tajik television correspondent] Tajik television. A question for Rakhman Nabiyevich and Boris Nikolayevich. What will be the future fate of incomplete construction projects of importance to the entire union, especially to the Central Asian region, which used to be financed from the union budget? How do you view the defense of the state border in the Commonwealth of Independent States? You see, the Republic of Tajikistan alone has over 1,200 kilometers of borders with foreign states, and the situation there is far from calm.

[Yeltsin] I understand. Let me answer the first question, on the incomplete construction projects of importance to the entire state, by which I mean those affecting all 11 states belonging to the Commonwealth of Independent States. We have reached an understanding that we will settle this matter as a special case in a separate agreement. This is because we shall not have a single budget, since—I want to stress this—we do not have a single state comprising 11 states. What we have is a commonwealth of 11 independent states. Therefore, it is only by putting our share into each project that we shall be able to continue building.

If someone refuses to put in his share, that will mean he is not participating in building this project, or that we freeze it. [sentence as heard]

[Nazarbayev] Rahmon Nabiyev, please.

[Nabiyev] [passage indistinct]

[Yeltsin] I will answer the second question about the state borders. A committee has been set up to guard the state borders of the countries of the Commonwealth. We mean that the common borders of the countries of the Commonwealth will be guarded by the relevant troops of this committee. With regards to the borders between the states, we still have to study and later sign... but according to our preliminary agreement our borders between the states of the CIS must be permeable [prozrachnye], and the citizens must be able move from one state to another without having to obtain any kind of visa.

[Kravchuk] I would like add some detail for a small question: Boris Nikolayevich was talking about a Russian committee, but not about a Commonwealth committee, because this may be interpreted the wrong way. There is no question about a committee for all the states of the Commonwealth and evidently there will not be.

[Yeltsin] I agree.

[NHK correspondent] Teleradio Company NHK: Mr. President, as we know, you are a rival of Dovlat Khudanazarov, or at least you were during his electoral campaign. Tell us, please, have your pro-communist views changed in the light of Tajikistan's joining the CIS? Thank you.

[Nabiyev] Dovlat Khudanazarov was not my only rival. There were 10 of us. And there were seven of us in the elections. Well, the fact that everywhere there, and here as well, there were advertisements that a communist coup had taken place in Tajikistan, well, there is no foundation in this.

[Kazakh Radio correspondent] I have a question for all the presidents of the republics, and now of independent states. Dear Comrades, please tell us how far will the agreed economic links, which were concluded in the current year 1991, as well as next year, be implemented? As far as we know, only 11 percent of such agreements have been concluded so far in the country as a whole, and considering the fact that the population of the country as a whole is in a difficult situation, while the work of the enterprises is, naturally, at a standstill—in Kazakhstan as well—and Belarus alone is implementing its obligations and deliveries, we in Kazakhstan would like to know: What will be done in connection with the documents that have been signed today? Thank you. I represent Kazakh radio.

[Nazarbayev] Islam Abduganiyevich Karimov, president of Uzbekistan.

[Karimov] I would like to repeat once again the crucial difference between the Commonwealth and the old Union. It is, first and foremost, that the former Union was linked by chains, if you will, and by obligations that were imposed from above. Boris Nikolayevich has stressed more than once—and I would like all those present to pay attention to this, because here is a key to many issues: We have united in a single Commonwealth according to our own free will. As to mutual economic links, I would like to stress yet again that we are united by common interests; and since there are common interests, you can be sure that each of us will implement their obligations in such a way as to ensure that they receive from others what is due to them.

[Kazakh correspondent] Well, we can only hope. Thank you.

[Nazarbayev] Please, go ahead.

[(?Askarov]) I have two questions, and the first question is to Boris Nikolayevich.

[Nazarbayev] Please, introduce yourself.

[(?Askarov]) (?Askarov), newspaper [word indistinct] Tashkent. The first question is to Boris Nikolayevich. Does the establishment of the Commonwealth assume that there is a minimum of democratic requirements that make cooperation possible? This is the first question, and the second question is to the president of Uzbekistan, Islam Abduganiyevich Karimov. Will prices be freed in Uzbekistan starting 2 January?. In general, what price policy is being planned?

[Yeltsin] I am rather surprised at your first question, about a minimium of democracy. On the contrary. If we are not tied together by the network of links, if we are not forcibly tied together by the center, if the center is demolished, if the totalitarian communist regime is demolished, and if the field of our activities is now cleared of mines, then on the contrary, this field becomes open to democratic cooperation on the most democratically civilized basis, the path that has been embarked on by the most civilized countries in the world. Only on this basis does our Commonwealth begin its existence.

[Karimov] As for the second question, I would like to say that we also adhere to free prices. Only we have one specific feature, our specific feature. We will move to free prices under the condition of the full guarantee of protection for the most vulnerable social strata of the population.

[Unidentifed journalist] A question for the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan. Kazakh television. Do you, Esteemed Presidents, think that at the present stage, given the cessation of fighting, the ideals of truth and nonviolence can be achieved? Thank you.

[Mutalibov] Yes. One must always aspire to achieve this ideal. There are quite a few places of conflict in the world. The world community is making every possible effort to localize those conflicts. I think that things the center has not been able to achieve, we will be able to do within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States and relying on our good will. We will be able to restore peace and tranquility in the region, and above all, those good neighborly relations that have always been characteristic of Armenia and Azerbaijan.

[Ter-Petrosyan] As far as this matter is concerned, I am in complete solidarity with Ayaz Niyazovich.

[Norwegian Television correspondent, in Norwegian with superimposed Russian translation] [word indistinct] Norwegian television. A question to everyone. Why have you abandoned the name of the Commonwealth of Eurasian and Independent States? Second, have you allowed for any of your member states to unite in the future into ethnic political blocs to tackle various issues?

[Kravchuk] I can answer the first part of the question. The thing is that the beginning and the foundation of the Commonwealth was laid in Minsk, and that is where the Commonwealth was given its existing name. After that, the three states—which are Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine—ratified those documents. That is why both in a judicial and political sense it would not be desirable to change the name.

[Nazarbayev] But the declaration that you will be able to read tomorrow, and which is now lying here, describes the economic space as Eurasian. The floor is to be given to [word indistinct], please.

[Unidentified correspondent] My question is this. It is obviously above all for Leonid Matveyevich, I beg your pardon, Leonid Makarovich. Following the signing of the Minsk or Brest agreements—they can be described variously—the Ukrainian parliament adopted a number of amendments that are fundamental as far as I can judge. To what extent have you now elaborated the mechanism for ratification of the agreements signed in Alma-Ata. That is the first thing. Second, what is the mechanism for resolving all problems that could provoke conflicts that will be arising as ethnic parliaments adopt their own amendments. Thank you.

[Kravchuk] According to the Vienna convention, any document signed by the head of state, just like the amendments passed by the parliament of that state to the given document during its ratification, is compulsory for the state in question. Therefore, in this case both documents are valid; both the one I have signed in Belarus, and the amendments passed by the parliaments. As to the second part of the mechanism for the work, compliance with, and enforcement of these amendments, we will still be revising it since we have just started to actively work on it.

[Unidentified correspondent] [passage indistinct]

[Karimov] First question. Leonid Makarovich has just answered this question. Today we have signed several agreements, and there it is actually stated in one of the points that when all these documents are being ratified, all qualifications that will be made by deputies and by the parliament as a whole will be taken into account in shaping the charter of the Commonwealth and its practical activities. We have already agreed here that the question of the Aral is not just a question and problem for Uzbekistan, but for the five republics. So I am sure that when these documents are ratified, the parliaments of each one of these five republics will, I hope, agree on the Aral issue, which will be taken into account in subsequent documents.

[Yeltsin] Russia has already done so.

[Karimov] Russia has already, during the ratification—Boris Nikolayevich has corrected me and I must thank him—the Russian parliament, during ratification, has taken account, along with Chernobyl, of the problems, the solution of the problem of the Aral.

As for the second question, I am expressing my own opinion, my own point of view: The citizens of each individual republic will evidently at the same time be considered citizens of the Commonwealth, solving the question you are asking about, which evidently many people here (?would like to know about).

[Kravchuk] I want to add that that is not possible. That is, each state will decide the question of citizenship in accordance with national legislation. Our legislation provides for dual citizenship. In other words, by agreement with Uzbekistan, we can agree that citizens living in Uzbekistan—our Ukrainians—and Uzbeks in Ukraine, can have dual citizenship. But there will be no citizenship of the Commonwealth. It is not a state.

[Yeltsin] I want to add that each state in passing a citizenship law determines how citizenship will be appropriately defined. Either it's just one citizenship, or dual citizenship.

This applies especially to the Russian Federation, where there are sovereign republics within Russia—16 of them—and a person can be a citizen both of Tatarstan and Russia.

As for a citizen of the Commonwealth—I agree with Leonid Makarovich that this is not a state and, therefore, there cannot be a citizen of the Commonwealth.

[Nazarbayev] First microphone, please.

[BUDEM MILOSERDNY correspondent]: The former all-Union and now, it seems... [changes thought] International charity newspaper BUDEM MILOSERDNY. Esteemed Presidents, could you say please whether you discussed at your meeting the issue of the return from one sovereign state to another; that is, of the former deported peoples to their homelands, in particular the Crimean Tatars? And also, how will the Commonwealth resolve the problems that were typical for the whole territory of the former Union? Thank you.

[Nazarbayev] I would like to address it to Mircea Snegur who has not been called on much at this news conference.

[Snegur] We did not discuss this question at today's meeting. But in principle I think that, for example, our republic has discussed and passed a law on the rehabilitation of the deported (?peoples) at a time and manner that we are ready to accept our (?deported peoples). But at today's meeting the question as it stands was not discussed.

[Nazarbayev] Third microphone, please.

[Radio Liberty correspondent] [word indistinct], Radio Liberty. A question to Kazakhstan President Nursultan Abishevich Nazarbayev. I will ask it in Russian. You are the first head of state to close a nuclear test range. This is unprecedented. Are you conducting negotiations or discussions on closing all test ranges in the world? This is one question. And one brief question. The division of the property of the former Union is taking place now. What is Kazakhstan's share, especially in consulate and embassy buildings. Well, what is the share? Briefly, please.

[Nazarbayev] Regarding the embassy and consulate buildings, this question, so to speak, to Boris Nikolayevich.

Inasmuch [words indistinct] this question, I promised you, I will read out the agreement on joint measures with respect to nuclear arms:

The Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine, henceforth called member-states;

nuclear weapons are stationed in these four;

confirming their adherence to the nonproliferation of nuclear armaments; striving for the elimination of all nuclear armaments; wishing to act to strengthen international stability; have agreed on the following:

Article 1. The nuclear armaments that are part of the unified strategic armed forces ensure the collective security of all members of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Article 2. The member-states of the present agreement confirm the obligation not to be the first to use nuclear weapons.

Article 3. The member-states of the present agreement are jointly drawing up a policy on nuclear matters.

Article 4. Until nuclear weapons have been completely eliminated on the territory of the republics of Belarus and Ukraine, decisions on the need to use them are to made, after coordination with the head of the states party to the agreement, by the RSFSR president on the basis of procedures drawn up jointly by the member-states.

Article 5. Paragraph 1. The republics of Belarus and the Ukraine undertake to join the 1968 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty as non-nuclear states, and to conclude with IAEA the appropriate agreements and guarantees.

Paragraph 2. The member-states of the present agreement undertake not to transfer to anyone nuclear weapons or other triggering devices and technologies, or control over such nuclear triggering devices, either directly or indirectly, as well as to not in any way help, encourage, or prompt some state not possessing nuclear weapons toward the production or producing by any other method of nuclear weapons or other nuclear triggering devices, or control over such weapons or triggering devices.

Paragraph 3. The provisions of paragraph 2 of this article do not stand in the way of the transference of nuclear weapons from the Republic of Belarus, or from the republics of Kazakhstan and Ukraine to RSFSR territory with a view to destroying them.

Article 6. The member-states of this agreement, in accordance with the international treaty, will assist in the elimination of nuclear weapons by 1 July 1992 in the Republic of Belarus, and in the republics of Kazakhstan and Ukraine they will ensure the withdrawal of tactical nuclear weapons to central factory premises for dismantling them under joint supervision.

Article 7. The Governments of the Republic of Belarus, Republic of Kazakhstan, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine undertake to submit a treaty on strategic offensive arms for ratification by the Supreme Soviets of their states.

Article 8. The present agreement requires ratification. It will come into force on the 30th day after the handing over of all ratification papers to the RSFSR Government for safe keeping. Enacted in Alma-Ata, and so on.

As far as the nuclear test grounds situated on the territory of Kazakhstan are concerned—many now know of this—I think this will be decided in the interests of the whole Commonwealth by agreement.

[Yeltsin] With regard to embassies and consulates: Of course once the agreement on the Commonwealth of Independent States was signed in Minsk by the three states—Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia—there was panic in embassies—they even started selling the property of embassies and trade representations—especially that trade representations had been abolished, and 20 out of 133 embassies had also been abolished. Therefore, by a decree of the president of the Russian Federation, all the property of embassies, consulates, trade representations, and so on abroad was declared Russian property. Accordingly, these embassies are the embassies of the Russian Federation in a given state. At the same time, we agreed today to set up a commission and to assess the combined property of all facilities, embassies, consulates, trade representations, and so on abroad.

And if any state among the Commonwealth countries concludes a diplomatic agreement with any state, we will immediately give it a share of the embassy's property to use.

[Kravchuk] And in conclusion, esteemed friends, I will read you the main document, Protocol of the Agreement on Setting Up the Commonwealth of Independent States, which was signed on 8 December of 1991 in Minsk, by the Republic of Belarus, the Russian Federation, and Ukraine. The Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Republic of Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, the Republic of Turkmenistan, the Republic of Uzbekistan, and Ukraine, on an equal basis, and as high contracting parties, are forming a Commonwealth of Independent States. The agreement on the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States comes into force for each of the high contracting parties from the moment of its ratification. Documents regulating cooperation in the framework of the Commonwealth will be worked out on the basis of agreement on setting up the Commonwealth of Independent States, taking into consideration the reservations made during its ratification. This protocol is a constituent part of the agreement on setting up a Commonwealth of Independent States. Concluded in Alma-Ata, on 21 December 1991.

[Yeltsin] Also, I want to read out several documents signed today by the heads of state, the 11 member-states of the Commonwealth:

Protocol: Proceeding from the clause enshrined in the agreement on the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and the Alma-Ata Declaration on retaining the general military strategic area under a unified command and a single control over nuclear weapons, the eminent parties to the agreement agreed on the following:

Until the issue of reforming the Armed Forces is resolved, the command of the Armed Forces is entrusted to Marshal Shaposhnikov, Yevgeniy Ivanovich. Proposals on this issue are to be introduced on 30 December this year for examination by the heads of state in Minsk.

The agreement on the coordinating institutions of the CIS:

First, in order to resolve issues connected to the coordination of the activities of the Commonwealth states in the sphere of common interests, a supreme body of the Commonwealth is to be created—the Council of Heads of State; also the Council of Heads of Government.

Second, the plenipotentiary representatives of the Commonwealth states are instructed to introduce on 30 December this year, for examination by the Council of Heads of State, proposals on abolishing the structures of the former USSR, and also on the Commonwealth's coordinating institutions.

[Nazarbayev] Many thanks for your attention, dear friends. Best wishes to you.

Kozyrev Comments After News Conference

OW2112195091 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1822 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Following item transmitted via KYODO]

[Excerpts] President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan opened the final press conference. He described the documents adopted on Saturday by the heads of 11 countries that formed the Commonwealth of independent states [CIS] as "very important acts radically altering the make-up of our country". [passage omitted]

With reference to the future of the former USSR institutions abroad B. Yeltsin said that all their property whose hasty partition and sale had already begun will be placed under Russia's jurisdiction. If members of the CIS decide to open their own missions abroad, they'll receive their share of this property.

Developing this theme, Russia's foreign minister Andrey Kozyrev said after the press conference in his eclusive interview for IF's correspondents that the staff of the USSR institutions abroad will be gradually replaced. This replacement will be gradual, not hasty, he said. The ambassadors who "lost touch with the situation in this country will be replaced first of all", said Kozyrev. When asked about the destiny of the USSR foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze, Andrey Kozyrev said that, with all respect for Shevardnadze's merits, only one road is open to him: resignation.

In an interview for IF's correspondents Sergey Shakhray, the Russian President's adviser on legal issues, spoke about the draft agreement on the Commonwealth institutions discussed in Alma-Ata. The document has already been discussed, he said, but some of its articles will have to be finalized. The document's provisions concerning the main intitutions of the Commonwealth and their basic working bodies are already approved.

PRAVDA Declared 'Commonwealth Newspaper'

PM2312123491 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 23 Dec 91 p 1

[PRAVDA chief editor Gennadiy Seleznev "Message to Readers"]

[Text] Alma-Ata has gone down in history. What kind of history is not yet fully clear. The heads of the independent states have decided, on behalf of their peoples, that the Commonwealth will not have a unified statehood, and the definition of great power is not for us now. It is sad to have to recognize all this, but such is life.

Readers are naturally concerned to know, what about PRAVDA? Who will receive it now, only the inhabitants of Russia? We think not. States that have chosen the path of democracy should not artificially erect barriers in the path of our newspaper on its way to the reader in Bishkek or Kishinev, Paris or Kiev. It is now no exaggeration to say that PRAVDA is becoming an international sociopolitical newspaper, linking by a thread of communication all who speak and read Russian, regardless of where they live. Naturally, first and foremost we will closely analyze the development of the new statehood and the way in which human rights are observed in these conditions. Let us trust that one of the first interstate agreements will be a document guaranteeing the right of citizens of the independent states to receive information and the creation of the conditions for the periodical press to survive.

And so, from today's issue, PRAVDA becomes a Commonwealth newspaper. That is a good word—"Commonwealth," and we hope that the politicians and statesmen will not turn it into an empty sound or emasculate this sacred concept.

Commentator Sees Commonwealth as 'Only Chance'

LD2112154991 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1444 GMT 21 Dec 91

[By TASS commentator Ivan Ivanov]

[Text] Moscow, 21 Dec (TASS)—So, the leaders of 11 of the republics of the former USSR have today announced the formation of the Commonwealth of Independent States. This news allows us to hope that we shall manage to overcome the destructive, centrifugal trends.

The Union state formed in 1922 was essentially unitary. Perestroyka pointedly raised the question of how we should live in the future, together or apart; and if together, according to what principles.

Today one remembers 1988, when the Baltic republics raised the issue of economic sovereignty. That seemed like sedition. The disease was suppressed. Unfortunately, Andrey Sakharov's proposal to turn the USSR into a union of soviet republics of Europe and Asia was not heeded in time.

Only when the ideas of sovereignty had become dominant did the center put forward the notion of the need to reform the Union by signing a new Union treaty. This notion was reinforced by the Union-wide referendum held in March 1991, in which the majority of the population supported the preservation of a Federal state, albeit in a renewed form.

However, the leaders of what were now already sovereign republics, who had come to power on the wave of the Gorbachev reforms, had got into their stride and did not want to share their power with the center, which was embodied in their eyes by Mikhail Gorbachev and by the Union parliament and government.

In spite of Mikhail Gorbachev's titanic efforts, three versions of the Union treaty had turned into mere archive documents by 8 December. The leaders of Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine decided to establish, without the participation of the center, a pragmatic alliance of nations in which its members would not be subordinate to a strong central government, and all relations would be built on the basis of bilateral and multilateral treaties. They have now been joined by another eight of the former Union republics. It looks as though the idea of a Commonwealth is today the only chance to save the peoples of the former Union from fratricidal wars and preserve a common economic and geopolitical space.

Future, Goals of Commonwealth Considered

PM2312112191 Moscow PRAVDA in Russian 23 Dec 91 pp 1-2

[Article by Aleksandr Ilin: "They Called the Country Their Fatherland"]

[Text] Only a year short of its 70th anniversary the USSR is receding into history. In the heat of political passions what unflattering labels are not being hastily stuck to the doors of the abandoned common home! "Empire," "monster," "result of communist totalitarianism..." Truly, it is absurd, hurtful, and painful to hear all these scathing words about the country which for so many years we called our Motherland, our Fatherland, which our fathers, grandfathers, brothers, mothers, and sisters tried to defend—and did defend—against an evil, merciless foe during the Great Patriotic War.

It grieves one to hear ill spoken of something which ordinary people—not politicians—preserve to this day in their memory and hearts as something that unites us all by the community of our biography and the community of our fate. No, we did not live in an "area," as it is now fashionable to call it, we lived in a country which it is still difficult, almost impossible, to imagine divided by borders, customs posts, and striped posts...

But "the past does not return," and perhaps the new Commonwealth of Independent States in the present situation is in fact the only way out of the impasse and is undoubtedly, politically, an expedient solution. The future will show what it will bring us, the citizens of the former USSR. We shall hope that this future will not deceive us. I should just like to ask one thing of all those on whom the people's fate depends—that they do not repeat the old errors, do not curse the entire past indiscriminately and heedlessly, do not "shoot" it down, or there may be no future.

A country is not a territory, it is primarily people, peoples, who have traveled a long, hard path together. There has been a lot on this path and one cannot reduce everything merely to tragedy and diktat.

A year ago I was lucky enough to visit Nurek, to walk along the unique dam of the GES [hydroelectric power station] which had indeed been constructed by the entire country. I visited the city library, which with the happy touch of the remarkable writer and citizen Sergey Baruzdin was rightly called in those years the "library of the friendship of the peoples"—well known writers, renowned military leaders, and cosmonauts had sent their books there from all corners of the Soviet Union... Now life in the library has somehow become quieter: The creators of the Nurek GES have left for new construction sites and those who remain in the comfortable town on the bank of the fast-flowing Vakhsh are also mostly working elsewhere. But the library staffers are still carefully keeping and tending the books selflessly and honestly bestowed on the city and I am sure that anyone who takes a look there will as it were touch history, our common culture, and the friendship of the peoples, which was sincere and by no means only for show.

And it is a good thing that the Alma-Ata declaration stresses the desire to consolidate the relations of friendship, good-neighborliness, and mutually advantageous cooperation with their deep historical roots.

In their comments on the documents signed in Belovezhskaya Forest and Alma-Ata and in interviews for the press, politicians speak largely of the new nature of mutual relations between the independent states of the Commonwealth, of the problems of the management of the joint armed forces and national formations, of who should control the notorious "nuclear button." All these are undoubtedly very important questions which alarm both us who live in this country and in particular foreign leaders. It seems that here all the details have been finally worked out, the majority of contradictions have been overcome and that the "Yugoslav option" does not threaten us or the world. May that be the case.

Although, of course, life and practice will still require that we return again to some problems, specify some matters, adjust them, and coordinate them. A very great deal will depend on the political wisdom and good will of the leaders of the sovereign states which have formed the Commonwealth. In contrast to the 1922 treaty, which was adopted at a Congress of Soviets by fully empowered delegations from the republics, the new agreements are primarily the fruit of the personal joint efforts of the leaders, and that increases many times over their personal responsibility. What is done is done, as they say, and there is hardly any point in complaining about the losses of democracy which, especially at first, were not avoided in forming the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States]. The unusual complexity of the situation in the country and the intolerability of delay in adopting fundamental decisions obviously demanded nonstandard approaches and resolute actions. And nonetheless one can understand the concern of those who are warning against possible thoughtless steps on the basis of the "get in there quick" principle. The Commonwealth needs firm legal foundations, subjectivism and the play of political ambitions are intolerable here.

The course of life, its progress, are determined not only by the will of political leaders. And the ties which hold together the new Commonwealth will be all the former the more diverse, extensive, and organic, are the ties between the peoples of our states. Economic, cultural, and spiritual ties. Ties built on the basis of new, genuinely democratic, foundations, on the basis of equal rights and mutual respect. On the strict observance of human rights and freedoms, including the rights of national minorities. And, of course, on the basis of the conscientious fulfillment of commitments to each other, on a sense of responsibility for the conservation of civil peace and interethnic concord. So that what is needed is not only the wisdom of politicians but also reliance on the wisdom of the peoples, on a kind of "people's diplomacy," on all that is best which has been accumulated over previous years in relations between them.

The Alma-Ata agreements are only a milestone in our peoples' movement toward a new civilized community. It is not hard to predict that on the forthcoming path with its sharp turns both difficulties and obstacles may arise. Well, we shall have to learn in harmony to resolve the inevitable contradictions and to find correct approaches each time.

The three G's—Georgia, Gamsakhurdia, and Gorbachev—have remained outside the CIS framework. Georgia is rent by internal quarrels and has again become one of the "hot spots where shots are resounding and blood is being shed. Gamsakhurdia's regime is experiencing days of hard trials. And I would be very much averse to the people of a republic with which both Russia and the other CIS states are linked by joint history to suffer here. These mutual relations may have been overcast by tragic events many times in the past and now but, when you hear the reports from Tbilisi you cannot help experiencing a feeling of brief—after all to this day the pain of the Georgian people has not become alien to us.

The fate of M.S. Gorbachev, who with the creation of the CIS seems to have been pushed from the main political arena—deserves a special mention. Of course, it is the simplest thing of all to pour forth unflattering words in the wake of a departing politician and to importunately enumerate his blunders. It is harder to understand their nature and to draw the lessons which, I am sure, will not be superfluous in our further existence. Because it is really time finally to stop charging from one extreme to another, from euphoria to curses. Let history have its say.

...We called our country our Fatherland. It was the one and only for us all. And it will remain as such in our hearts forever.

But bon voyage to the new Commonwealth!

Latvia

Prime Minister Sees 'Friendly' Ties With CIS

LD2212041291 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 0300 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Godmanis, head of the Latvian Government, expressed the hope that some kind of center will not dominate the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS]. Speaking on the future of relations between Latvia and the CIS, he said that as the democratic processes develop, we will establish friendly relations based on market principles with these countries.

Lithuania

Council Recognizes Republics' Independence

LD2212111491 Vilnius Radio Vilnius in English 0000 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Yesterday, the Lithuanian Supreme Council recognized the independence of eight republics of the former Soviet Union: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Belarus, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. The Lithuanian Government is authorized to start negotiations on the establishment of diplomatic relations with six of these republics. As for the remaining two, Georgia and Azerbaijan, the information bureau of parliament failed to give Radio Vilnius an explanation why it had been decided only to recognize their independence without taking further diplomatic steps.

Republic Demands Stop to Communications Unit

LD1512094391 Vilnius Radio Vilnius International Service in Lithuanian 0200 GMT 14 Dec 91

[Text] The Lithuanian Government has demanded that a military communications unit stationed near Kaunas cease its work by 16 December. A decision signed by Prime Minister Gediminas Vagnorius says that the military unit of the government communications committee attached to the Soviet president, which previously belonged to the Soviet KGB and which is deployed in Linksmakalnis, Kaunas Rayon, has not stopped its intelligence work in Lithuania and that the leadership of that Soviet institution is avoiding the start of negotiations on abolishing this unit. The government document also recalls that, in the protocol signed on 23 August by the Lithuanian Government and the Soviet KGB, the Soviet KGB promised not to engage in any actions that would contradict the Republic of Lithuania's interests. If the Lithuanian Government demand is not complied with, the operation of the above-mentioned military unit will be forbidden. The government commission on abolishing Soviet military commissariats, the Internal Affairs Ministry, and the leadership of that military unit are instructed without delay to seal all buildings of that military unit, except for those serving social purposes.

Deputy Says Economy Depends on Eastern Trade

OW1012021191 Moscow BALTFAX in English 1440 GMT 9 Dec 91

[Transmitted by KYODO]

[Text] In an interview given to BF [BALTFAX] Mr. Kazimieras Antanavicius, a deputy to the Lithuanian parliament and a member of the Social Democratic Party of Lithuania, said the future of the Lithuanian economy depended on its contact with the East.

Mr. Antanavicius emphasised that at present the West accounts for a mere 4 percent of the Lithuanian exports, the East accounting for the rest.

"It would be a miracle if by the year 2000 the proportion of goods sent to the West went up to even 20 percent," he said.

Mr. Antanavicius was in favour of Lithuanian experts taking part in economic meetings held in republics of the former Soviet Union. One could not make any serious plans for the future unless one had the necessary information, he said. "We are bound to face competition on the part of the Eastern market," he said.

Deputy Aleksandras Ambrazevicius from the right wing in the Lithuanian parliament said in an interview given to BF that "looking for partners in the West is the right thing to do". But at the same time he thought Lithuania was interested in keeping its contacts with its "former Eastern partners" as well.

Polish Faction Leader Announces Hunger Strike

PM2312161791 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 20 Dec 91 First Edition p 2

[TASS report under general headline "In the States of the Former Union": "Hunger Strike"]

[Text] At a parliamentary plenary session, Ryszard Maciejkaniec, leader of the Polish faction in the Lithuanian Republic Supreme Council, announced that he was starting a hunger strike. The parliamentary deputy representing the interests of the Polish ethnic minority decided on this desperate step to support his demand for the abolition of direct administrative rule in the predominantly Polish-populated Vilnius and Salcininkai Rayons and for the announcement of the election of the rayon soviets dissolved by the Lithuanian parliament and government. Moreover, he is demanding the dismissal of government representatives who have assumed plenipotentiary powers in these rayons and who have abused their official position.

Interrepublic Affairs

Leaders Hold Post-Alma-Ata News Conference

Yeltsin, Burbulis on Commonwealth

LD2212212991 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1838 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Video report on news conferences given by Russian President Boris Yeltsin, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Gennadiy Burbulis, and Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev, at Moscow airport on their return from Alma-Ata on 22 December; all journalists are unidentified—recorded]

[Text] [Announcer] Boris Nikolayevich Yeltsin has returned to Moscow from Alma-Ata.

[Yeltsin] To be discussed are questions concerning the setting up of some kind of coordinating institutions of the Commonwealth, which now consists of 11 states, independent states. An historic event took place today. The main thing is the independence of each state. The whole principle of our agreement is founded on this: Without a center, without diktat. Every state has full economic rights and there will only be coordination of some kind—and very loyal coordination at that, I should say—between the member countries of the Commonwealth. In everything else every state, including Russia, will have its own economic policy. We will coordinate prices, the stages of the reform, and matters of coordinating the pace and time-scales of this reform, and so on: only those aspects. On everything else there will be complete independence. That is the main principle.

[First journalist] Will there be a common currency?

[Yeltsin] What?

[Second journalist] Common currency?

[First journalist] Common currency?

[Third journalist] Will there be common money, currency?

[Yeltsin] We agreed that there will be a common ruble in all countries of the Commonwealth, in the 11 countries. Later, if some republic or state decides to create its own national currency, then that will only be done by agreement with all the rest. We reached very important fundamental agreement on that.

[Announcer] At a news conference at the airport questions from journalists were answered by Gennadiy Burbulis, first deputy chairman of the government of Russia and secretary of state of the RSFSR; and by Andrey Kozyrev, minister of foreign affairs.

[Female journalist] How will political relations take shape between the new states?

[Burbulis] As between sovereign, independent states that have voluntarily joined together, considering each other's mutual interests and, the main thing, remembering the oppressive legacy of the Soviet totalitarian system. And our credo is that we should insure the protection and development of the interests of the people of our states, excluding the totalitarian legacy in whatever form at every stage in the development of the Commonwealth.

[Male journalist] Please say in what way and when changes will be made in the overseas representatives of the diplomatic corps?

[Kozyrev] I believe that they need have no worries on this. In principle, our diplomatic corps is a professional one, but of course reforms will be necessary in order to retain all the professionals and at the same time renew the diplomatic corps so that it meets the requirements of the present stage. Overall it seems to me that twins have been born, sisters, each with her own character, with her own face, but at the same time they all share the same mother, and I think we shall have some very close cooperation with the former union republics, now independent states.

[Burbulis] Yes, and at the same time, taking into consideration the entire experience of world diplomacy, we intend to restore to a certain extent the historic Russian diplomacy. We have all the prerequisites for this.

[Second male journalist] Please tell us the fate of Gorbachev, the question was asked at the news conference, when exactly—has a date for his resignation been fixed?

[Burbulis] Probably all of us, both you who ask such questions and those of us who answer them, should observe the utmost correctness and the political code of ethics, which implies a particular standing for Gorbachev and for us as politicians who have formed a fundamentally new prospect on the territory of the former USSR. Mikhail Sergeyevich's destiny as a politician is in his own hands, and our program of transformations corresponds to a greater extent to the interests of our population and to our reforms. We can therefore come together in a worthy manner along this constructive path, and we will assume an attitude of respect for everything constructive that Gorbachev personally did for our present achievements.

[Third male journalist] At the Alma-Ata news conference there was talk of the transparency of borders between the new states. To what extent will they be transparent? Will it be as now? Unhampered crossing of these borders between the existing republics exists. Or will there nevertheless be some restriction, not visas, perhaps, but some kind of control?

[Burbulis] The states have been united on the fact that they uphold the principle of open and agreed borders within the framework of the Commonwealth. We, for Russia, will confirm this principle in every way possible. But if difficulties arise for whatever reasons, we will try to overcome them in the supreme diplomatic way, based on agreement and equality, which was displayed in

Alma-Ata by virtually all the states which in principle had some difficulties in signing sign the final treaty.

[Female journalist] From Vesti, another question: The ministry of foreign affairs, in what form will it now be preserved? Will there be a single ministry over all the states?

[Kozyrev] It will be the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Smolenskaya Ploshchad in accordance with the decree by Boris Nikolayevich, but this means that we will retain all cadres who are capable and who want to and will work for the interests of Russia, of democratic Russia. Yesterday [22 December] morning, from Rome, I had a conversation with Shevardnadze. I assured him of our respect and of the fact that I am counting upon his assistance and advice, and I think that in this area, too, we will behave in just as civilized a way as Gennadiy Eduardovich mentioned with regard to the president of the USSR. We are not going to take the road of censuring everything that happened in the past. On the contrary, we will try to take everything that was best, and move further along the road of radical democratic changes in foreign policy.

[Fourth male journalist] What will the international form be for the other former republics, now independent states?

[Kozyrev] I hope that they, too, will move along the path of democratic changes, along the path of openness toward the surrounding world. I would like these twin sisters who have been born to be civilized people, I would like them to grow up not behind an iron curtain, with complexes, as we were brought up, but I would like them to be citizens of a civilized, free world. I hope that the other sovereign states will also move along this road; and we will give all possible assistance and provide the most favorable conditions both for using Russian embassies and for using the central apparatus so that the republics, the present sovereign states, are able to join the world community in full measure.

[Male journalist with foreign accent] Mr. Burbulis, could you say what is the most important and urgent task facing you?

[Burbulis] In development of Minsk and Alma-Ata, you mean? We have established the Commonwealth's highest body in the form of a council of chairmen and heads of state. We have also instituted a council of heads of government. A date has been set—30 December—for another meeting in Minsk, at which there is to be discussion of a proposal for the coordinating bodies of the Commonwealth and of the next steps for a harmonized economic policy within the framework of the Commonwealth; and the structures insuring a common, unified military-strategic space within the framework of the Commonwealth are to be finally confirmed. Thus, next week we can expect intensive work to finalize the structural, legal, and organizational aspects of what was begun in Minsk on 8 December and was worthily—worthily to the highest degree, I think—confirmed in Alma-Ata on 21 December.

Burbulis on Nuclear Control

LD2312120491 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1135 GMT 23 Dec 91

[By TASS diplomatic correspondents Sergey Staroselskiy and Aleksey Tabachnikov]

[Text] Moscow, 23 Dec (TASS)—The Commonwealth of Independent States that have nuclear weapons on their territory agreed in Alma-Ata to give Russia the right of control of "the nuclear button," Gennadiy Burbulis, RSFSR state secretary and first deputy chairman of the Russian Government, stated at a news conference today. This understanding was fixed in the agreement on joint measures on nuclear weapons. This document was signed by the heads of the Republic of Belarus, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the RSFSR, and the Ukraine. In the opinion of Gennadiy Burbulis, the agreement signed "gives a complete and exhaustive answer to those questions which have concerned the world community," and also contains a guarantee regarding control over nuclear weapons.

Conditions Set for Commonwealth Membership

OW2012183891 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1705 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Russia's First Deputy Economics and Finance Minister Andrey Nechayev has told a news conference in Moscow he handed over to the RSFSR president a memorandum containing a number of economic conditions all applicants for the commonwealth of independent states will have to honour. Nechayev said there should be a 3 percent restriction on republican budget deficits, high interest rates and the use of world prices in inter-republican transactions.

About the recent trip of the Russian Government delegation under first Vice-Premier Gennadiy Burbulis to France Nechayev said that as a result of complicated talks in Paris the agreement was achieved to channel to Russia the 2.3 billion francs worth of supplies under an agreement concluded earlier by the inter-republican economic committee.

Nechayev said that Russia will also have the credit of 2 billion francs for supplies of equipment, concluded earlier by France and the USSR Vneshekonombank.

Economic Agreement Signed With Azerbaijan

LD2212105591 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 1900 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] An economic agreement on the principles of trade and economic cooperation for 1992 has been signed between Russia and Azerbaijan. The document possesses a number of fundamental distinctions. Economic relations between the two republics are, for the first time, based on a mutually beneficial and equivalent basis. And moreover, for the first time ever, accounts have been settled in line with world prices. Metal, unrefined petroleum, machinery construction products, and other traditionally supplied goods will remain to be delivered from Russia to Azerbaijan in quantities sufficient for Azerbaijan's needs. For its part, Russia will remain a consumer of Azerbaijan's oil machinery construction products [as heard], oil refining, and chemical and agricultural products.

Federation Affairs

Decree Issued on External Intelligence Service

OW2012160791 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1440 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Russia's President, Boris Yeltsin, has passed a decree on the formation of Russia's external intelligence agency on the basis of the USSR Central Intelligence Service. The new body's task is to "organize intelligence activity in the interests of Russia's security and supply the bodies of state authority and administration with information".

Within a month, the entire property, buildings, data banks and documents of the Union intelligence service are to be passed to the Russian external intelligence service. This process will be supervised by a special commission.

Reactions To New Security, Internal Ministry

Bakatin Assesses 'Major Threat'

LD2112033191 Moscow TASS in English 0034 GMT 21 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Andrey Naryshkin]

[Text] Moscow December 21 TASS—The major threat of the creation of the Russian Security and Interior Affairs Ministry lays in "potential possibility of its turning into an uncontrollable body," head of the former Inter-Republican Security Service Vadim Bakatin believes.

At the same time, in his opinion, Boris Yeltsin's decree of December 19 on the creation of the Russian Ministry of Security and Interior Affairs on the basis of Union and republican structures of interior affairs and security "removes the uncertainty in financing law enforcement structures and enables the preservation of their staff."

"The unification of the Interior Ministry and the State Security Committee under one roof will help more efficiently combat organized crime and create with this aim a modern service, which neither the Interior Ministry nor the KGB have actually had," Bakatin told TASS.

"Until now we have tried to build the system of security bodies, proceeding from the Novo-Ogaryevo process," Bakatin admitted.

"A Commonwealth of Independent States will have quite a different system of law enforcement bodies. At the same time, despite the priority of national interests, inevitable in these conditions, I think coordination of activities of republican secret services and police is necessary."

Bakatin expressed the assurance "such a coordinating system will soon begin to function."

In his opinion, the meeting of heads of independent states on December 21 in Alma-Ata "should put everything to its places".

Crime Directorate Comments

LD2112032591 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1900 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Interview with G.F. Chebotarev, deputy chief of the directorate for combatting organized crime, and A.N. Sergeyev, chief of the directorate for combatting the illegal circulation of narcotics, by correspondent S. Slipchenko; place and date not given; from the "TV Inform" newscast—recorded—first paragraph announcer-read introduction]

[Text] A certain amount of activity could be observed today within the former Internal Affairs Ministry [MVD] in October Square. The sign was removed from outside the MVD entrance, while foreign correspondents asked what was going on inside and whether there was any panic. Leaders of the public relations services of the four Union subunits, Moscow, the Federal Security Agency, and Russia gathered to learn how they will live in the future within a common structure. Here, then, are the views of the specialists:

[Chebotarev] The new Russian ministry's creation in no way means the creation of a monster. On the contrary, the Russian ministry is proposing a significant reduction in the apparat's size by abolishing parallel structures which appear, to say the least, absurd at the present time. If the Commonwealth is set up and if, with its formation, the leaders of the sovereign republics conclude that it is necessary to set up some kind of center to coordinate the fight against organized crime—and in our view this is altogether necessary—I think that we will work toward ensuring this work. We work despite all the cataclysms connected with the reorganization, since we have been and are busy with work.

[Sergeyev] In practice, there has been no kind of influence from the center of late. The creation of this new ministry and the creation of such a large subunit to combat drugs, as I see it, is certainly justified at the present time. Russia is the main narcotics consumer. Creating such a large subunit in Russia, a unit which will interact with all the republics' subunits, is seen by us at the present time as the only possibility for pooling our efforts in the fight against the forces of drug addiction. The possibility is not ruled out of creating liaison officers in these republics in the fight against drugs.

[Slipchenko] Do you intend to create some kind of new body within this structure to link Russia with all the other republics?

[Sergeyev] By creating such a structure and a system of liaison officers and on the basis of the large Russian subunit, it is possible to pool the joint efforts of all the republics.

[Slipchenko] In this sense, will Russia not be replacing the central bodies that existed previously linking everyone together?

[Chebotarev] No, definitely not.

[Sergeyev] I think not.

[Chebotarev] Russia will be setting up its own ministry which will ensure public order and the fight against crime in Russia.

[Sergeyev] Yes, that is so.

[Chebotarev] Certainly, for this purpose, an optimum apparat will be set up that is considerably smaller than what exists at present in these four powerful departments. Certainly, only people who do not know the essence of the matter can frighten one by talk of a monster.

'Colossal Mistake' Says Deputy

LD2112025991 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1800 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Report by correspondent O. Vlasenko, including USSR People's Deputy Shchekochikhin's reaction to the formation of the Russian Security and Internal Affairs Ministry; first paragraph announcer-read introduction; from the "Vesti" newscast]

[Text] A very important factor—possibly the most important one—in Alma-Ata tomorrow [21 December] will be the extent to which the sides can trust each other. Some people believe that the foundations of trust are being eroded by certain steps being taken by Russia, especially the dramatic abolition of fundamentally important Union structures. The same thing is said today about the creation of the Russian Security Ministry. The Memorial Society has expressed alarm at the formation of this Ministry—the Russian Security and Internal Affairs Ministry—and has called on parliament to revoke the president's decree. Memorial regards the merging of state security and internal affairs organs as a dangerous starting-point for reorganization. Memorial says the result is a monstrous structure of which there is absolutely no recognized way of control:

[Begin recording] [Vlasenko] After the August putsch, the need to eliminate the security services' power monopoly became evident to Yeltsin and Gorbachev. A breakup took place with this aim. The internal and foreign intelligence services, the committee for protecting state borders, parliamentary communications, and the bodyguard attached to the presidential apparatus were split into independent services. Kryuchkov's potential successor lost most of his power because there was now a minimum of five successors. With the Union's disintegration, the USSR KGB service was renamed the Interrepublic Security Service and the RSFSR KGB the RSFSR Federal Security Agency. The reverse process is now underway. The logic of the RSFSR president's decree on forming the RSFSR Security and Internal Affairs Ministry is not uncontroversial. It should be remembered that the RSFSR Supreme Soviet has only just begun hearings on the law on RSFSR security; therefore, the decree has been issued before the overall guidelines for security in Russia have taken legislative shape. There is no legal basis for the new institution's activities.

[Shchekochikhin] I think that this decision is political, first and foremost, and like many decisions which are being made today, it does not consider what will be tomorrow and what will happen tomorrow. It seems to me that this is a colossal mistake. Seven different organizations in the United States are engaged in the battle against the mafia; in our country, this will be in one person's hands. This is the path toward colossal corruption. The militia today...[changes thought] I know hundreds of militia employees who, according to our data, are connected with the various mafia clans, and this could increase completely out of control. The Russian parliament this morning decided to debate Yeltsin's decree without delay. However, the deputies later decided that they were not sufficiently prepared for the debate and postponed it. The alarm about creating the Russian Security Ministry is understandable. As far as the KGB is concerned, there has always been discussion about whether creating new structures of any kind on the basis of this organization is permissible. The danger was that employees from the KGB—or even worse, whole, unchanged subunits of the Committee for State Security—would be automatically transferred to the new organization and that this would mean that they would retain all of their pleasant characteristics, as well.

The issue of former employees of the secret services is being solved in various ways in other countries, as is known. They have either changed the type of work which they do, or they are working in accordance with their qualifications but in new organizations. Each of these, as a rule, was approached individually. It seems to me, as well, that membership of the KGB in itself should not be a reason for isolation. However, secret service subunits are something quite different. No one in Eastern Europe has been brave enough to leave these untouched. This is why the need to dissolve the old organizations has always gone without saying during the reform of the secret services. The post-putsch reform of the KGB, despite the promises of a drastic reduction in the number of workers in the secret services and despite the organizational breakup and the division of the KGB departments, has been subjected to acute criticism, precisely because in the organizational sphere the skeleton of the old secret services has remained inviolable.

What do we have now? By all accounts this is a straightforward, mechanical merger of the special services of Russia with those of the Union, and the fusion of these two with the Internal Affairs Ministry—in other words, an amalgamation. Doesn't this greatly increase the likelihood of there being a new giant, which will run both itself and others, with a corresponding potential for repression? Maybe yes, maybe no. The decree has been signed, but no explanation has been forthcoming. In fact, there is nobody around to provide such explanations. Some of these people are in Rome, and others have already gone off to Alma-Ata. We checked on this today.

I don't think the failure to explain all these things is intentional. Anybody who knows anything about present Russian structures would agree with this. This is simply the result of a failure to ensure that the decisive actions now being taken are always thought out and, most important of all, prepared properly. Not all members of the government service are sufficiently competent. It is very easy to say that these are temporary difficulties, but when fundamentally important government decisions are insufficiently prepared and supervised, a vacuum of authority always forms. Other forces increasingly take over real power, for instance, the grey army of untalented bureaucrats which has grown unbelievably stronger in recent months. [end recording]

POSTFACTUM Reports Reaction

LD2012223991

[Editorial Report] Moscow POSTFACTUM in English on 20 December carries in its "Politics" section reports on reactions to RSFSR President Boris Yeltsin's 19 December decree creating the new Ministry of Security and the Interior.

POSTFACTUM at 1638 GMT carries the following: "First Deputy Chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Council Sergey Filatov has said that the president's decree on the formation of the RSFSR Ministry of Security and the Interior is an unhappy decree. On December 19, Sergey Filatov also told PF [POSTFACTUM]: I don't know how this decree appeared and consider it a very big step backward. Especially in terms of democracy.

"There is another thing that worries me: government communication service, the president's guard, the Supreme Council chairman's guard as well as the guard of state government premises—all these are separate structures, and now we are creating around it all the monster that includes all—the Interior Ministry, State Security. It does resemble NKVD (the former Interior Comissariat). All of these can't co-exist within this structure, if only for ideological reasons. And then it can't be run by one person.

"The decree, Filatov believes, creates preconditions for various misuses, as the function of control of the interacting structures disappears.

"On December 19, Filatov continued, he had a telephone conversation with First Deputy Chairman of the RSFSR Government Gennadiy Burbulis in which the latter was puzzled by the signing of the decree. Filatov sees two ways of resolving the situation: the first is talking to the president (we shall give him our view of this in Alma-Ata by all means) the second is discussing the question, at the initiative of the deputies, at the Supreme Council meeting (I think this must also affect the president).

"On December 20, the RSFSR Supreme Council, following the proposal of Mikhail Molostvov ,a member of the RSFSR Supreme Council Committee for Human Rights, instructed the RSFSR Supreme Council Committee for Legislation, the Committee for Security and the Committee for Legality, Law and Combatting Crime to consider the president's decree on the formation of the RSFSR Ministry of Security and the Interior and submit their conclusions for the discussion it on the Supreme Council within next week."

POSTFACTUM at 1639 GMT carries the following: "The main activities of the former KGB will be struggle with organized crime, says head of Novosibirsk regional interior administration Anatoly Kashutin. Kashutin also told PF [POSTFACTUM] that the KGB and the interior administration have absolutely similar structures engaged in combatting organized crime. But they interact, Kashutin believes, only on paper. They should get down to real business and unite their forces in fact , he said.

"Commenting on the RSFSR president's decree on the formation of the RSFSR Ministry of Security and Interior, Kashutin said: It is, in all probability, a correct decision. But it is too early to give a detailed comment of it. It is likely that one or two versions of the future structure will be considered and it will be for the RSFSR Supreme Council to take a final decision."

POSTFACTUM at 1640 GMT carries the following: "Yuriy Stepanov, commander of the Novosibirsk higher courses of the military counter-intelligence said that Yeltsin's decision on unification of the Security and Interior Affairs Ministry services at the interim period is right. Yuriy Stepanov thinks that Russian president Boris Yeltsin has issued the decree because he had nothing else to do.

"According to Stepanov, the former USSR republics put forward claims to the property of the former KGB and Interior Affairs Ministry. That is why, to solve the problem, Mr. Yeltsin has issued the decree on unification of the federal and republican structures. Mr. Stepanov would like the transitional period of Russia's making [as received] to be as short as possible, as the security organs and Interior Affairs Ministry should exist separately."

POSTFACTUM at 1641 GMT carries the following: "Veniamin Dolin, director of Buryat Agency of Federal Security: the decree on the unification of the security services and Interior Affairs Ministry is Yeltsin's another [as received] mistake. As Veniamin Dolin told PF, operative workers' attitude to the last decree of Russian President Boris Yeltsin on unification of the Russian and USSR Interior Affairs Ministries with the Federal Security Agency and Inter-republican Security Service into one ministry [sentence as received].

"According to him, after destructing the monster of KGB, Boris Yeltsin is now creating still more mighty monster, which is analogous to NKVD which existed during the period of the repressions of the thirties."

POSTFACTUM at 2004 GMT carries the following: "Aleksandr Vladimirov, chief of Interior Department of Tomsk regional Executive Committee said that Yeltsin's decree would end the law enforcement organs' work according to each in his own way principle. Aleksandr Vladimirov told PF that he cannot appreciate Yeltsin's decree in full volume because interior department staffers are unaware of it so far."

POSTFACTUM at 2005 GMT carries the following: "Valentin Sobolev, federal security agency chief in Tomsk region said that former KGB Tomsk regional department personnel are in a quandary. Valentin Sobolev told PF that the former KGB personnel proceed with their fulfilling tasks as before. We are law-abiding people. Sobolev also informed that it is too early to assert whether Yeltsin's decree will be of any use, the more so because similar merging of two ministries have already taken place."

Yeltsin Interviewed on Nuclear Arms, Gorbachev

LD2112180191 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 0840 GMT 21 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Mikhail Kolesnichenko]

[Text] New York, 21 Dec (TASS)—In an interview with NEWSWEEK magazine, to be published on Monday [23 December], RSFSR President Boris Yeltsin has stated that nuclear weapons will be under "central control."

"Republics will not control nuclear weapons deployed on their territories," Yeltsin said. "They will be centrally controlled." He also said: "We are taking control of the armed forces. About 10 republics will sign an agreement on the Commonwealth at a meeting in Alma-Ata on 21 December. We will then sign a special treaty on a defense union and on the establishment of a unified command over strategic armed forces." Yeltsin stated that there will be a centralized command over strategic forces, including the Air Force and the Navy. The leader of Russia noted at the same time that "the Ukraine wants to have its own army." He added that the Ukraine will be allowed to have control only over land forces.

Yeltsin noted that he did not see a future role for Mikhail Gorbachev in a new community. "Gorbachev is a high-class politician... He can express his wishes and we can consider the wishes he will express," the Russian president stressed. "As for us, it would be indelicate to make proposals to him."

The creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Russian leader continued, does not violate the Constitution. Replying to a question on the possibility of a new coup d'etat by the military, Yeltsin underlined that he did not believe it would happen. "Russia has doubled the wages of the military, and not only in Russia, and all this will be financed from the Russian budget," he said. "As a result the mood in the army is changing." At the same time, the RSFSR president stressed, some old party structures could sabotage the formation of the new community. In this connection, he noted: "Gorbachev wants this process of transition to proceed peacefully."

Yeltsin touched upon the issue of humanitarian aid to Russian cities provided by the United States. He said that corrupted Soviet trade organizations, which were responsible for distribution in the past, had been dismissed, but that "new Russian organizations have not yet had enough time to become corrupted." "We are trying to improve the distribution system," the RSFSR president said. He expressed the wish that the aid to be sent directly to various regions, bypassing Moscow. Yeltsin suggested in this connection that U.S. Air Force planes be allowed to deliver aid directly to Russian cities this winter.

The RSFSR president said that he had not asked the U.S. secretary of state during his visit to Moscow to hold a summit with President Bush. "When the structures of the old Union are fully disintegrated, when the question of Gorbachev is resolved, then it will be necessary to meet with Bush," he said.

Radical Democrat Party Forms Shadow Cabinet

OW2012194691 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1705 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Russia's parliamentary party of Radical Democrats intends to form a shadow cabinet for the Federation. It has announced an open competition for ministerial posts till Jan 10. The cabinet will be ready to assume responsibility for economic life in case the present government fails about it.

The party's leader - the People's Deputy Sergey Yushenkov has told journalists that unnamed sponsors have set up a support fund for the shadow cabinet whose members will be paid 70-90% of the present ministers' salaries.

Official Says Living Standards May Fall

OW2012175691 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1440 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Russia's First Deputy-Minister of Finance and Economy, Mr. Andrey Nechayev, said at a press conference on Friday [20 December] that at the initial stage of the reforms the population's living standards may drop by about 30 per cent.

Mr. Nechayev also said that at the beginning of January, the government of Russia would submit to parliament a draft deficit-free budget for the first quarter of 1992. The budget will be drawn for every quarter of the year. The biggest cuts are expected to be made in the centralized and state investments, including those in housing construction and arms imports, which will be reduced about 8 times over the year.

Mr. Nechayev admitted that there was no complete agreement with the defence ministry on cuts in arms imports. He said that spending on the maintenance of the armed forces would remain at the previous level, but added that the defence ministry would have to cut down the military personnel by 0.5 - 1 million men.

Revenues will come from the VAT [value added tax], whose share is expected to amount to 41.8 per cent of the revenue part of the budget, and also from the income tax which will account for 23 per cent of the revenues.

Hard-Currency Income Tax To Be 'Deeply Cut'

OW2012180191 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1440 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] The government of the Russian federation is drafting documents on taxing hard-currency incomes. Russia's Deputy-Minister of Finance and Economy, Mr. Andrey Nechayev, said at a press conference on Friday [20 December], that according to these documents, the share of hard-currency income which enterprises are made to sell to the state, hitherto amounting to 40 per cent, will be deeply cut down. He noted that it was impossible to eliminate this practice altogether because of the need to service the foreign debt and finance centralized imports, above all food imports.

Obviously, machine-building exports will be freed from the hard-currency tax. The raw-materials branches will be taxed as before. Industrial enterprises are expected to sell hard currency to banks at the market exchange rate. Mr. Nechayev said that they would have to sell from 10 to 20 per cent of their hard-currency income.

Official: Grain Purchases 'Less' Than Needed

LD2012144291 Moscow Radio Moscow World Service in English 1300 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] Russia's Government purchases of grain will amount to 22 million tonnes this year. This is less than is needed to satisfy the demand. But there is no reason to be especially alarmed about that, said Leonid Cheshinskiy, the Minister of Bread Products. The necessary amount of grain has been purchased abroad, and now it is important to have it shipped in in time.

International Affairs

Yeltsin Cited on NATO, Nuclear Arms Control

LD2012201591 Moscow TASS in English 1826 GMT 20 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Valeriy Shashkov]

[Text] Brussels December 20 TASS—Russia wants to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, Russian President Boris Yeltsin said in a statement circulated here on Friday [20 December].

The statement, read at a meeting of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council which brought together for the first time foreign ministers from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and nine countries from central and eastern Europe, including Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania, said:

On behalf of the Russian leadership, I would like to greet participants in the first meeting of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council and express confidence that the work of this new institute of international interaction will facilitate the creation of an atmosphere of mutual understanding and trust and consolidate stability and security on the European continent.

The development of these processes is undoubtedly being facilitated by deep changes underway in our country, which open up unprecedented prospects for constructive interaction between Russia and the rest of the world. Now these relations can be based on joint recognition of common values and single vision of ways of ensuring international security. It is from these positions that we view the perspective of our relations with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

We are viewing these relations in all seriousness and would like to develop dialogue and contacts with the North Atlantic alliance both at the political and military levels. Today we are raising a question of Russia's membership in NATO, but are prepared to regard this as a long-term political objective.

The Russian leadership was positive in its assessment of the results of the Rome session of the NATO Council and the decisions adopted at the session. We wholeheartedly support efforts aimed at building a new security "(?zone) from Vancouver to Vladivostok". It is now important to overcome the heritage of confrontation and take decisive measures to reciprocally reduce military potentials, while building-up mutual understanding and predictability.

Russia and other members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, now undergoing the process of formation, intend to pursue a policy of strengthening international peace and security. They pledge guarantees to honour treaties and agreements signed by the former Soviet Union. Special attention will be paid to ensuring single control over nuclear armaments and their nonproliferation. We are confident that all this will create prerequisites for forming a reliable collective security system in Europe with the participation of the members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, as well as the United States and Canada.

We believe that Russia, as well as other Commonwealth member- countries, will make a substantial contribution to the activity of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council. It is ready to participate in its subsequent sessions.

Further on Silayev's Appointment to EC

OW2012155791 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1440 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Ivan Silayev has been appointed the Russian Federation's permanent representative at the European Communities in Brussels. Boris Yeltsin's corresponding decree was signed on December 18.

Before his new appointment, Mr. Silayev had headed the USSR Inter-State Economic Council. Earlier, he had been the Russian Federation's prime minister.

Prime Minister Burbulis Interviewed on Relations

LD2312121591 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1942 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Interview with Gennadiy Burbulis, first deputy prime minister of the RSFSR, by commentator Nikolay Svanidze, in Moscow on 18 December; in the "Facing Russia" program —recorded]

[Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Svanidze] Gennadiy Eduardovich, Russia is an independent country and is even returning to its traditional heraldry. However, we are now committed to the world recognizing it as such, as an independent country and an independent state. But the issue was raised bluntly at Yeltsin's meeting with Baker that both the Americans and the world community as a whole are not yet hurrying to recognize Russia. What do you think is the main problem here?

[Burbulis] Our recognition is a matter of time. What depends on us is that...

[Svanidze interrupts] You think it will be in the near future?

[Burbulis] Yes, of course. You know that today Romania and ...

[Svanidze interrupts] And Norway.

[Burbulis] And Norway and Turkey have recognized the Russian Federation and I think that a number of others will also do this by Monday [30 December] next week. This will be a worthy and at the same time a serious problem in our development for us. We were prepared for this, but not to the extent which we would like today. It is a matter of full embassies abroad and it is a matter of liability for the obligations of the former union within the framework of the international community. We accept this liability in full.

[Svanidze] Incidentally, there is a very interesting point here connected with recognition of Russia's independence. Russia's independence is being recognized but this does not signify a recognition of its right to legal succession as a state in relation to the union in very many aspects—in particular with regard to the UN Security Council, of which the USSR was a member. Does this mean that Russia will inherit this membership? This is a very important question.

[Burbulis] This is a very important question. There are a number of possible solutions to it. But we must take into account one feature which is out of the ordinary. The Russian Federation is one of the four states, which are former republics of the Union, on whose territory strategic nuclear weapons are deployed. However, it is the only republic on whose territory management of these weapons has taken place. Yes, this is how things have taken shape, historically. However, this is probably one of the most important features for the world community and for the structures of the United Nations Organization and for designation to these structures of the Security Council.

I am not talking here about the 150th state, but about a state that has a diplomatic tradition going back many centuries. There are many countries in the world today where embassy buildings and residences symbolize our Russian diplomacy.

[Svanidze] That is so. That is so. But Germany and Japan also have a rich cultural and diplomatic tradition. Furthermore, Russia stands no comparison with their economic might, unfortunately. But if you judge by nuclear weapons and the traditional postwar domination of the Security Council by the victors in that war, then of course it has to be Russia. But the world has changed. Japan wants to become a member. It has a strong case. What are the real prospects for Russia?

[Burbulis] Well, in the first place, we will keep the place of the former union no matter what happens. The only question here is what the legal configuration should be.

[Svanidze] After all, the Commonwealth cannot be a subject, a state.

[Burbulis] Not at the moment, if you go by the present guidelines adopted by the members of the Commonwealth. But I do not rule out the possibility that in the near future, during the next three years or so, there may be a need for some adjustment to present arrangements, in the interests of all the states which used to belong to the former union.

[Svanidze] In other words you are saying that the Commonwealth will assume a more rigid form.

[Burbulis] I understand it differently. I am saying that a need will probably evolve for more organized coordination bodies. My own personal view of the near future, my own attitude is naturally still colored by the process of casting off the horrors of communist totalitarianism, which has sent everybody scurrying off in opposite directions. This is a (?straightforward), normal, and healthy requirement for integrated, joint, and collegial structures, including in the economy and, evidently, foreign policy. This is a real prospect which certainly should not be discouraged. It must be given some thought.

The UN seat should, I think, belong to Russia.

[Svanidze] In the Security Council?

[Burbulis] In the Security Council, yes. We want the world community to make this decision (?in accordance with all the rules).

[Svanidze] It seems to me that a lot here will probably depend on how control over the army is exercised within the Commonwealth. Could you say something about this?

[Burbulis] An agreement on a defense union should be signed. Its structure can be adjusted later. But it is already clear that this defense union should be based on a defense council made up of the heads of state of the Commonwealth members. There should be joint strategic forces, including strategic nuclear forces, the Air Force and the Navy, including submarines. That is the general plan. It is quite realistic and meets the requirements of even those states which do not belong to the Commonwealth at the moment.

Even more realistic is an agreement between the four states on whose territory there are strategic nuclear weapons, an agreement which would define the regulations for single management and single control of these nuclear weapons, including a single policy for the implementation of existing treaties on reduction of nuclear weapons. We intend not just to honor the undertakings made by the former union in this connection, but to propose a more dynamic and slightly adjusted structure for this reduction. This question was discussed in detail during the talks with U.S. Secretary of State Baker, in particular. We encountered mutual understanding in this respect. No doubt there will be mutual support.

Further on Yeltsin's Official Visit to Italy

Nuclear Arms Under 'Reliable Control'

LD2012143491 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1252 GMT 20 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent]

[Excerpts] Rome 20 Dec (TASS)—President Boris Yeltsin began the last day of his official visit to Italy today by meeting Franco Nobile, head of the Italian Industrial Reconstruction Institute, one of the largest industrial associations of the country, and Gianni Agnelli, owner of the Fiat automobile concern. The talks were held in private. They focused on relations between Italian businessmen and the Russian Federation. [passage omitted]

Then President Yeltsin went to the Capitol Hill, the sacred center of the ancient Roman empire. The city's municipal council building now stands on it. The Russian president was greeted by Rome Mayor Franco Carraro.

B. Yeltsin, who is in Rome for the first time, expressed delight at this beautiful city and in how its inhabitants are carefully safeguarding their history and the monuments of antiquity. Unfortunately, he said, in Moscow about 2,200 ancient monuments have been destroyed over the past 70 years.

Noting the fruitful nature of the talks held here, the Russian president expressed confidence that even after the USSR has virtually ceased to exist cooperation between Russia and Italy will not only not be reduced but, on the contrary, will develop further. We have achieved agreement on virtually all the questions discussed, he stressed.

B. Yeltsin gave an assurance that the nuclear weapons currently located in four states on the territory of the former USSR are under reliable control. "On this score, the people of Rome can sleep peacefully," the president said. He reported that at the meeting in Alma-Ata tomorrow a mechanism will be worked out which will ensure a unified command of the strategic armed forces. There will be one nuclear button, in a unified center, he said.

In conclusion, B. Yeltsin stated that he will do everything possible to strengthen friendship between the two peoples.

The mayor of Rome presented B. Yeltsin with a medal in honor of the anniversary of Rome whose history goes back nearly 2,750 years, and a bronze reproduction of the she-wolf which, legend has it, suckled Romulus and Remus, the founders of the city.

For his part, the president of Russia presented F. Carraro with a symbolic statuette "the keeper of the bronze mountain" made up of precious stones from the Urals.

B. Yeltsin looked round the Capitoline Museum which holds ancient sculptures, including a rare collection of busts of the Roman emperors and eminent figures of Rome and Greece.

From the municipality the Russian president left for Quirinal Palace where a departure ceremony to conclude his official visit to Italy was held. [passage omitted]

Union Obligations To Be Honored

LD2012202591 Moscow TASS in English
1933 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] Rome December 20 TASS—Russian President Boris Yeltsin pledged "no repetition of the autumn of 1917" in relations with Russia's creditors, promising guarantees from Russia to honour obligations under treaties and agreements signed by the Soviet Union. "As president of the Russian Federation I declare that in any situation my state will guarantee to honour these obligations", Yeltsin said.

The Russian president, who was speaking at a meeting with members of the Italian Industrial Confederation (Confindustria), called for a new quality in East-West relations in the wake of the collapse of Communist regimes in eastern Europe and some Soviet republics and said Russia was interested in becoming a reliable partner in these relations.

Yeltsin thanked Italian friends and the world community for helping Russia in its hour of trial and pointed out that by supporting Russian reforms the West was investing in stability, peace and progress.

"When deciding to form the Commonwealth of Independent States we sought to avoid the uncontrolled disintegration of the huge country and avert replaying the Yugoslav scenario," Yeltsin said.

The transition from the former Union to the Commonwealth of Independent States will be mainly completed in December. The old central structures will either be scrapped within two weeks or transferred under Russia's jurisdiction, Yeltsin said.

The Russian Cabinet is now working on a package of major documents aiming to liberalize domestic and foreign economic legislation. This will offer favourable conditions to foreign investors ready to help saturate the market with consumer goods.

Yeltsin told Confindustria that talks with Mr. Agnelli encouraged hopes that Fiat would purchase 30 per cent of stocks of the Volga car-making plant and help boost production of cars there.

After the meeting with Italian industrialists, the Russian president visited Vatican and met Pope John Paul II. They talked one-to-one and then Yeltsin took in the world-famous Sistine Chapel.

Holds 'Historic' Vatican Talks

LD2012221591 Moscow TASS in English
2139 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] Vatican City December 20 TASS—Russian President Boris Yeltsin described today's meeting with head of the Roman-Catholic Church Pope John Paul II as "historic". Yeltsin told TASS it was a great event for him as he visited [the] Vatican and met the pope for the first time.

The Russian president said they discussed a wide range of issues, concerning the situation in the former Soviet Union, the creation of a Commonwealth of Independent States, the single command over the nuclear weapons, ways to increase attention to religion, all denominations, provide for equal attitude to them, and the creation of conditions to ensure equal rights for believers and non-believers.

Head of the Vatican Press Service Joaquin Navarro Valls told correspondents the meeting was cordial.

President Yeltsin dwelt on the interior [internal] situation in the former Soviet Union and stressed current difficulties, and "particular contribution of renewal" which Gorbachev has made to the Soviet Union.

Yeltsin expressed the hope that a Commonwealth of Independent States will be able to achieve" stability through an economic rise, and gradually dispell fears in the West, Valls said. [quotation mark as received]

The president "took pains to assure that the new constitution of the Russian Federal Republic would guarantee full religious freedom to all denominations without distinction," he said. In his turn, John Paul II stressed the importance of religious freedom for the harmonious development of society and expressed the hope for a closer and more fraternal cooperation among all the Christian churches, particularly with the Russian Orthodox Church.

The pope assured Catholic communities will do their best to help overcome current difficulties.

During the meeting, the [word indistinct] also discussed some issues of international politics, devoting special attention to peace. In this connection, the Russian president pointed out the delicate problem of control over nuclear weapons, the Vatican representative said.

After the meeting, John Paul II welcomed the Russian president's wife Naina Yeltsin and accompanying officials.

The sides exchanged gifts: Boris Yeltsin presented the pope with an icon of Saint Nicholas and an easter egg from the patriarch's workshops; John Paul II presented Yeltsin with a mosaic picture depicting St. Peter's Square and cathedral from the workshop of the Holy See.

On the same day, Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev and Vatican State Secretary Angelo Sodano had a meeting.

Upon the completion of a news conference, Boris Yeltsin and accompanying officials went to the Fiumicino Airport. At 22:45 Moscow time, they left for Alma-Ata.

Vatican Relations Assessed

OW2112071691 Moscow INTERFAX in English 2000 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] Russian President Boris Yeltsin's meeting with the Pope will not lead to anything new in relations between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Catholic Church, the chief of the technical department of the Moscow Patriarchate, Metropolitan Vladimir, has told IF [INTERFAX]. He said that it would "neither improve or worsen relations between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Vatican."

Metropolitan Vladimir said that for the Russian state that meeting was probably of certain interest, in the first place, in terms of establishing inter-state relations.

IF has learned that Patriarch Aleksey II is going to meet next week with the leader of the Catholics of European Russia Archbishop Tadeus Kondrusievic, currently visiting the Vatican. This meeting will reportedly clear up the outlook for relations between the Moscow Patriarchate and the Vatican.

Holds News Conference

LD2112110891 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 0041 GMT 21 Dec 91

["Boris Yeltsin's Concluding News Conference Took Place in Rome"—TASS headline; by unidentified TASS correspondent]

[Text] Rome, 20 Dec (TASS)—Before leaving Rome by air for Alma-Ata, Boris Yeltsin, who was here on a two-day visit, held his concluding news conference. He gave a high assessment of the conversations and talks that had taken place and stressed how full they had been. A total of 15 meetings were held with Italian leaders, eminent public and political figures, major industrialists and financiers.

The first question concerned the official recognition of Russia by Italy:

[Yeltsin] The award to me of the high order of the Knight of the Grand Cross signifies the de facto recognition of Russia by Italy since such an order is bestowed only on heads of independent states. And the de jure recognition is evidently just a matter of a few days. And all the more so since today's meeting in Brussels of 12 EC representatives showed that they all agree that it is necessary to recognize Russia as an independent state and give it help within the framework of the agreements signed earlier with the former Union.

[CNN correspondent] Boris Nikolayevich, you are now taking truly decisive steps. Why do you believe that joining NATO will be useful for Russia, will this not give rise to a negative reaction on the part of neighboring countries, for instance China?

[Yeltsin] I am not saying that joining NATO will take place immediately, I believe this to be premature. But history, sooner or later, will lead us to this. Russia is going to Europe and wants to take an active part in the continent's affairs, in creating a free Europe. The general command of our community must in the long-term, probably, merge with NATO and form the unified armed forces of Europe. As far as China is concerned, we are now activating relations with it. I sent a special message to the PRC leadership and received a reply. They are ready to expand contacts and we will move in this direction.

The correspondent of the GIORNO newspaper inquires whether the single military command and the Council of Presidents of the Commonwealth of Independent States will not be "a vestige of the previous center".

[Yeltsin] There will be no central bodies at all. The council of heads of states will not issue any instructions. Only the unified strategic forces will be subordinate to it so that, after all, there is only one nuclear button, and not a nuclear button in each republic.

There was another question about the possibility of joining NATO. A REPUBBLICA correspondent asked whether this did not signify a willingness to enter a structure in which the dominant role is played by the United States who would consequently acquire control over all the armed forces.

[Yeltsin] As far as the merging of NATO with the command of our armed forces belonging to the CIS [Commonwealth of Independent States] countries is concerned, I repeat this is a long-term prospect. It is not a matter of five or seven years hence, but of a more distant future, when there are no nuclear weapons and when there is integration not only in Europe but also outside it. Then it will be an entirely possible option.

The same journalist asked whether the issue of aid from the FRG was not connected with the problem of Honecker's extradition.

[Yeltsin] No, it is not connected. Germany is giving us aid in line with an accord reached during my visit to the FRG this year at the invitation of Chancellor Kohl. This aid is being rendered along very broad lines. As far as Honecker's extraditon is concerned, the government made the decision to hand him over to Germany, but he moved from the villa where he was staying to the Chilean Embassy and that means he is no longer on our territory. So I called Mr. Kohl and told him that Germany must sort this out with the Chilean leadership, get Honecker out of the embassy and take him to Germany.

[Israeli Radio correspondent] What will Russia's policy be in the Middle East and, in particular, with regard to Israel?

[Yeltsin] Russia intends to establish diplomatic relations with Israel at the level of embassies. This isolation which has lasted many years must be ended. It is unjust to a state regardless of whether it is large or small, we must not be isolated from each other in that way. We will be able to resolve questions more quickly together including the problem of the Middle East.

A correspondent of UNITA asks about relations between Russia and the Ukraine in the light of today's decisions by the Ukrainian parliament. She would also like to know whether B. Yeltsin had sent his message to NATO as president of Russia or on behalf of the CIS.

[Yeltsin] I can reply to the second question imediately: as leader of Russia. As far as concerns the decisions of the Ukrainian parliament, they do not affect the strategic armed forces. I am flying to Alma-Ata in an hour and half and there all the states of the Commonwealth, I think, will sign a treaty on a defense alliance [soyuz], on a single command, and on the supreme commander in chief. We will also discuss other questions.

[TASS correspondent] You spoke today of the importance of the ruble in the Commonwealth. How does that fit in with Ukraine's decision, which has been just announced, to introduce its own monetary unit?

[Yeltsin] In accordance with our agreement, signed by the representatives of the three republics, the introduction of national currencies is decided in a coordinated manner. For the time being we have the ruble, but this does not mean that a year or two from now a national currency will not be introduced somewhere.

A correspondent of the AGI [expansion unknown] Agency asks B. Yeltsin to comment on his meeting with the pope.

[Yeltsin] For me, both for the politician and for the man, it is of great significance. It is the first time I met him. In a face-to-face conversation a wide range of important issues was discussed, including freedom of conscience. The discussion was very interesting and useful. It will serve the further development of our relations.

[ADN-KRONOS Agency correspondent] Mister President, did you raise the question about Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev in your conversation with John Paul II?

[Yeltsin] Yes. I said that since 1917 not a single leader was seen off in peace. Either they were dug out of their graves or called criminal. In general, there has not been a single leader who has been able to retire in peace. Gorbachev told me that he will evidently retire in December. Having respect for him, we will see him off with honor. We will decide tomorrow, at the council of the heads of states, what the president is entitled to in retirement. As the former president of the country, he will be treated with respect. His holiness highly appreciated this from both the political and human point of view.

Further, the Russian president told of his meetings with representatives of business circles, describing them as "packed and full of content". He said that an agreement has been reached with Fiat to assess, in the course of a month, the property of AvtoVAZ and to select a new model of motor vehicle for production after reconstrunction. The question of the purchase of one-third of AvtoVAZ shares by Fiat was discussed. Agreement was reached in principle that the deal is to be signed a month from now. The president also said that Russia will take on all obligations that ensue from economic agreements with foreign firms concluded previously by the Soviet Union.

[Question; attribution not given] What is your attitude toward the Movement of Democratic Reforms, founded by E. Shevardnadze and A. Yakovlev, and also toward the fact that G. Popov has compared the state of affairs in Russia with the situation in the Weimar Republic?

[Yeltsin] My relations with Yakovlev, Shevardnadze, and the movement are normal. At their last congress the question was discussed of whether they are not to become a constructive opposition to the Russian Government, but the congress did not adopt such a decision. G. Popov also spoke about this. But I believe that everyone may express their view. It is a good thing that real pluralism has appeared in our country. Yakovlev and Shevardnadze sent a letter to me and assured me that they do not think of joining the opposition and that they are supporting Russia and its reforms.

[Question; attribution not given] It is known that a proportion of the funds, allocated by the "Seven" for giving assistance to Russia, will be controlled personally by Vice President Rutskoy. What is your attitude to this?

[Yeltsin] I have deprived him of this possiblity.

[MESSAGGERO newspaper] Have you invited John Paul II to visit Moscow? How specifically do you imagine the first stage of cooperation with NATO?

[Yeltsin] Do not talk again about NATO! I have already said that this was a question for the distant future. But we will cooperate all the time, and we are already cooperating. We have already had first contacts, and we will develop them. As far as the invitation is concerned, I did not repeat it, because it was made by Gorbachev during his visit to the Vatican.

[Question; attribution not given] What is your attitude toward the events in Yugoslavia? Does Russia recognize the independence of Croatia and Slovenia?

[Yeltsin] We are inclined to recognize their independence in case military action come to an end, but no final decision has been made yet.

[Lithuanian radio and TV correspondent] When will the Soviet troops leave the territory of Lithuania?

[Yeltsin] Recently we had contacts with the leaders of all the Baltic republics with the participation of Shaposhnikov, the defense minister of the former Union. We agreed on the schedule of the troop withdrawal. The Baltic republics may agree to keep air defense subunits, which could defend their territory, but that is their own decision. The troops will leave, but one must keep in mind that a tense situation has arisen in Russia, because our servicemen are coming back from other Eastern European countries. There are 500,000 people, and they all have to be settled. They are going back to Russia, and that is why I think that the withdrawal will take a few years. Maybe three years. But at the same time we must sign a treaty or a protocol on the status of the troops that are there, to ensure that they do not take part in internal conflicts.

Concluding his conversation with the press, Boris Yeltsin said that he was satisfied with his Italian visit, the results of which had "even slightly exceeded" his expectations. In the president's words, he had had his first successful contact with Italian leaders. Boris Yeltsin thanked the journalists for their active cooperation and congratulated them on the impending Christmas and New Year holidays.

At the end of the news conference, held at the Villa Abamelek, it was announced that as a result of a competition in the fields of politics, culture, and sports conducted by the AMI News Agency and the GIALLO VIP magazine, Boris Yeltsin had been declared "man of the year". The Russian president said that he would hand over the prize awarded in connection with this, 100 million lira, to buy food products for the children of the mining districts of the Kuznetsk coal field. The publishers of the INGENIERE magazine also announced the award of a special prize to the Russian president. The financial part of that will be handed over to the children of the Urals, Boris Yeltsin said.

Voshchanov on Alma-Ata

LD2012154591 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1444 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] Rome, 20 Dec (TASS)—Speaking in Rome at a news conference on the completion of the first day of Yeltsin's visit to Italy, Voshchanov, Russian Federation presidential press secretary, said: In the opinion of the Russian leadership, the Commonwealth of Independent States [CIS] should make use of the experience of the British Commonwealth and the European Community. The CIS will be a unitary state. The functions of administration in it will be performed by coordinating bodies, probably in the form of a council of heads of state and an interparliamentary council. It is also proposed that a body similar to Interpol be set up. In Alma-Ata an agreement has to be reached on the principles for adopting decisions within the framework of the CIS. Russia thinks that each republic should have one vote.

Commenting on the decree of the head of the Russian Federation on the abolition of the Union Ministry of External Relations, Voshchanov said that from next year all USSR Embassies will be transferred to the jurisdiction of the RSFSR and will carry out the functions of diplomatic representations of Russia. He noted that the activity of the Soviet Embassies was formerly in fact financed from the budget of the Russian Federation, and the greater part of the property of the foreign representations historically belonged to Russia. Not a single Soviet diplomat, at least at the first stage, will be fired, although until the start of 1992 the Soviet Embassies will not represent anybody since the Soviet Union no longer exists, the Russian President's spokesman stressed.

Roundup of Final Day of Visit

LD2112094391 Moscow TASS in English 0908 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Rome December 21 TASS—Russian Republic President Boris Yeltsin has ended his two-day official visit to Italy.

On Friday [20 December] he met with Franko Nobili, head of the Italian Industrial Reconstruction Institute, and Giovanni Agnelli, owner of the Fiat automobile concern, to discuss prospects for developing direct ties between Italian and Russian businesses.

The Russian leader also visited the headquarters of the Confederation of Italian Industrialists. Its President Sergio Pininfarina stressed the Italian business community is interested and believes in the revival of Russia, which has long-standing ties with Italy.

Yeltsin said Italy is one of the main trade partners of Russia and reiterated the Russian leadership's determination to carry out radical economic reforms in the country. He said a package of documents is now being worked out to boost foreign economic activities and protect the interests of foreign investors.

Yeltsin expressed gratitude to Italy and the whole world for their efforts to help Russia live through this difficult time.

The Russian leader visited the Quirinale Palace for a ceremony which marked the end of the official part of his visit to Italy.

In the evening, Yeltsin visited the Vatican to meet Pope John Paul II. In an interview with TASS, Yeltsin described his meeting with the pope as "historic".

"We discussed a wide range of issues, including the situation in the Soviet Union, the creation of the Commonwealth of Independent States, unified command of nuclear weapons and issues concerning religion and believers' equality in our country," Yeltsin said.

Yeltsin, who has been named the man of the year, was awarded the order of the Knight of the Big Cross, the Italian highest state award, and 100 million Italian lires for his political achievements. Yeltsin said the money will be used to buy food for miners' children in Kuzbass.

Message From Italian President

LD2312021291 Moscow TASS in English 2258 GMT 22 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Dmitriy Polunin]

[Text] Rome December 23 TASS - The new Commonwealth of Independent States will help develop international cooperation in Europe and will further improve relations between Russia and Italy, Italian President Francesco Cossiga wrote in a message to Russian President Boris Yeltsin on Sunday [22 December].

Italian Government appreciates that Russia is developing into a country with new economy peacefully, through dialogue and negotiations, and expresses its hope the process will develop in the interests of freedom, democracy, mutual understanding and observation of human rights, Cossiga wrote.

Cossiga also sent a message to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, expressing his own and the Italian people's admiration and respect of a person who made it possible to create a better democratic world.

Commentary Lauds Results

LD2212044491 Moscow Radio Moscow World Service in English 1310 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Anatoliy Potapov commentary on RSFSR President Boris Yeltsin's visit to Italy—read by announcer]

[Text] Potapov writes that Russia's direct links with Italy have been established; in fact, Italy has already recognized Russia as an independent, sovereign state. An official ceremony for such recognition will undoubtedly follow. There is a solid basis for bilateral ties: a joint declaration signed in Rome, a major political document which actually clearly determines that Russia is becoming a necessary partner in international relations. And what about the treaty on friendship and cooperation that Italy and the USSR signed over a year ago? After all, it was concluded for 20 years to be automatically prolonged if neither side declared its denunciation, but the USSR ceases to exist as a state subject to international law, and there will simply be hardly any need to denounce the treaty. In view of the real political situation, the Italian premier, Giulio Andreotti, stressed in Moscow back in September that from now on Italy would interact with the sovereign Republics and even separate regions of the USSR. So, Russia is the first sovereign Republic of the former USSR in which such interaction has been established. Indicatively, the principles of the Russian-Italian Declaration and the Italian-Soviet Treaty virtually coincide. This testifies to the continuity of Rome's relation with Moscow, although on the basis of new realities and concrete political conditions. However, the Declaration specifically notes that the earlier concluded Soviet-Italian accords will be applied to the Italian-Russian ties by taking ongoing changes into account. This is a major result of the understandings that have been reached. Throughout the visit, Russia's belonging to Europe was particularly emphasized. Naturally, the declaration focuses on the participation of both states in expanding and continuing the Helsinki process and in consolidating European security. It should be remembered that it will be Russia, apparently with other former soviet Republics, that will take on in a Helsinki II next March. During the talks, Russian President Boris Yeltsin had emphasized Russia's readiness to promote in every way cooperation with the existing European institutions, the European communities included. The talks produced a significant result in the economic field, including defined strategic priorities in such cooperation. Interestingly, that section of the joint Declaration conceretely reflects the changes in Russia, specifies cooperation at enterpreneur's level, and underlines the great importance for Russia with Italy's experience in various market economy spheres. And last but not least, the atmosphere of cordiality and expression of sympathy for the peoples of Russia during the visit appear to be a good sign for future relations. In short, with Boris Yeltsin's trip to Rome, Russia's appearance on the (?last) international scene seem to have taken place at last.

Russian Embassy Established in Tehran

LD2212222291 Moscow TASS in English 1701 GMT 22 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Oleg Kuzmin]

[Text] Tehran December 22 TASS—Early today the Russian tricolor flag was hoisted over the former USSR Embassy in the Islamic Republic of Iran. This action symbolizes that the former Soviet plenipotentiary representation turns into the Embassy of the Russian Federation. The step was approved by the Iranian leadership during Russian Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoy's recent visit to Iran who authorised Vladimir Gudev, the USSR ambassador to Iran, to represent the Russian Federation.

The Iranian Supreme National Security Council which met on Saturday [21 December] night under the chairmanship of President 'Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani, announced that Tehran "is ready to recognise the former Soviet republics, in the first place, Russia and Asian Muslim republics", according to Tehran Radio.

The Council also decided to "take measures to render assistance to the new independent states in choosing their own way of development and establishing friendly relations with other members of the international community", Tehran Radio said.

Iranian Minister Remarks on Rutskoy Visit

LD2112110291 Moscow TASS in English 0956 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Tehran December 21 (TASS)—Iranian Foreign Minsiter 'Ali Akbar Velayati said on Friday [20 December] Russian Vice-President Aleksanr Rutskoy "convinced the Iranian leadership" that Russia will observe agreements signed by the Soviet Union and Iran. He told Iranian television that Iran will send a delegation to Moscow in December to discuss economic cooperation between both states. Velayati stressed Iran will recognise former Soviet republics after they fulfil legal conditions required for proclaiming their independence.

Rutskoy Meets With Pakistani Prime Minister

LD2012124191 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1110 GMT 20 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondents Vladislav Legantsov, Nikolay Semenenko, and Vasiliy Titov]

[Text] Lahore, 20 Dec (TASS)—Russian Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoy met with Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif in Lahore today. This was the first in a series of meetings the Russian vice president will have within the framework of his working visit to Pakistan.

In the course of the conversation, the sides discussed thoroughly and in detail the issues of streamlining Russian-Pakistani relations and establishing direct bilateral political and trade and economic links. Participants in the meeting noted the great potential available for cooperation. They also stated the need to overcome the negative points evident in USSR-Pakistan relations in the past.

Aleksandr Rutskoy and Nawaz Sharif exchanged general views about the problem of resolving the situation around Afghanistan.

Answering questions from TASS correspondents, the Pakistani prime minister said that his country has already decided to recognize the Russian Federation. Nawaz Sharif informed Aleksandr Rutskoy of this decision. The head of the Pakistani Government also said that close cooperation in all spheres will be of great benefit to both states.

Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoy conveyed to Nawaz Sharif the Russian Government's invitation to visit the RSFSR, which was accepted.

In the afternoon, Aleksandr Rutskoy and those accompanying him will leave for Islamabad where they will continue talks with representatives of the Pakistani leadership.

Ends 'Landmark' Visit

LD2212145291 Moscow TASS in English 1425 GMT 22 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondents Vladislav Legantsov and Nikolay Semenenko]

[Text] Islamabad December 22 TASS—The working visit to Pakistan by Russia's Vice President Aleksandr Rutskoy has become an important landmark in the development of Russo-Pakistani relations. The visit ended today. His meetings with Pakistani President Ghulam Ishaq Khan, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and other officials were held in a warm atmosphere.

As was expected, special attention during the talks was devoted to the discussion of matters aimed at establishing and developing direct bilateral contacts between Russia and Pakistan in the economy, trade, science, technology, culture and other fields. Negotiators believe that the two sides have got a high potential for that.

A joint communique issued at the close of the visit expresses satisfaction with the establishment of diplomatic relations between Russia and Pakistan. The two sides agreed to set up a joint commission to study and reaffirm the existing agreements and work out new ones, and decided to establish regular contacts between the top legislative bodies of the two countries. Russian parliament members, who were on the Soviet [as received] delegation, invited Pakistani parliamentarians to visit Russia.

On behalf of Russia's President Boris Yeltsin, Rutskoy invited the president and prime minister of Pakistan to pay official visits to Moscow.

The two sides arrived at a conclusion about the need and advisability to develop contacts through Foreign and Defence Ministries within the framework of the two countries' efforts towards strengthening peace and stability in the region and in the world as a whole.

Russia and Pakistan came out in favour of establishing a nuclear- weapon-free zone in south Asia.

Much attention at the talks was given to the discussion of the Afghan problem. The two sides reaffirmed commitment to settling it politically as soon as possible and stated their determination to cooperate for the sake of attaining this end.

Both Russia and Pakistan recognise the Afghan people's right to decide their future themselves without interference from the outside and fully support the U.N. secretary-general's initiative aimed at settling the years-long crisis in that country.

The inadmissibility of making use of the prisoners-of-war humanitarian issue for attaining political ends was pointed out during the discussion.

The negotiators expressed their determination to do everything possible for the release of all prisoners-of-war in Afghanistan.

In this connection Rutskoy highly appreciated the Pakistani Government's efforts towards ensuring the repartriation of Soviet prisoners-of-war held captive by Afghan rebels.

On Sunday [22 December] afternoon the Russian vice president leaves Islamabad for Kabul for talks with the leadership of the Republic of Afghanistan.

Urges Yeltsin To Show 'Tolerance'

BK2212145891 Hong Kong AFP in English 1443 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Islamabad, Dec 22 (AFP)—Russian Vice President Alexandr Rutskoy called on the Russian Government and President Boris Yeltsin on Sunday [22 December] to move quickly to prevent a crisis in the largest of the former Soviet republics.

Rutskoy, speaking at a press conference at the end of an official three-day visit to Pakistan, also urged Yeltsin to show greater tolerance towards former communists and communist reformers.

Responding to a question about apparent divisions at the top of the Russian leadership, the Russian vice president said now is the time for rapid moves to establish law and order and democracy.

"I think there is no longer any time for words," he said.

Rutskoy criticised the lack of democracy in the Russian leadership in an article published in a Russian newspaper on Wednesday [18 December] and is considered a spokesman for the growing opposition to Yeltsin.

At Sunday's press conference, Rutskoy stressed his credentials as a reformer.

"Yeltsin and those people who are mentioning me together with the communists. Were they not communist previously?" he asked.

"At least I was not the secretary for the regional committee of the Communist Party and I was not a member of the Politburo of the Communist Party," he said.

"I have even established a group of democratic communists in parliament—the communists who would like to go on the path of reform and change," he said.

"I do not want to divide people along lines that they belong or belonged to this or that party," Rutskoy said. "My objective is that these people ... should be on the side of democracy and not on the side of anarchy."

During his visit, Rutskoy offered Pakistan on behalf of Yeltsin a treaty of friendship and cooperation.

Relations between Moscow and Islamabad were strained during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Pakistan supports the mujahidin who are fighting to overthrow the Soviet-backed government in Kabul.

Rutskoy held talks with mujahidin leaders Saturday, but failed in his attempts to obtain the release of several dozen Soviets captured during the near 10-year occupation which ended in 1989.

Afghans Release Soviet POW

LD2212183591 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1425 GMT 22 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondents Vladislav Legantsov and Nikolay Semenenko]

[Text] Islamabad, 22 December (TASS)—Just as the special aircraft carrying the Russian delegation led by Vice-President Aleksandr Rutskoy was about to leave Islamabad for Kabul, the number of passengers on board increased by one—a former Soviet POW captured in Afghanistan and released today on the instructions of Sebghatollah Mojaddedi, leader of the National Liberation Front of Afghanistan opposition group. A front representative told a TASS correspondent that the POW, who is from Tajikistan, is called Khabibullah.

It is hoped in the capital of Pakistan that the handover of the POW may be an important step along the way toward fulfillment by the mujahidin of pledges made by them during recent meetings in Moscow and confirmed by opposition leaders during talks in Islamabad with the Russian vice president yesterday [21 December].

At the same time, judging from what some of these leaders are saying, the process of releasing all Soviet POW's will not be easy. Some opposition leaders would like to use former Soviet POW's as political hostages and as a means of putting pressure on Russia in order to win various concessions. For example, Golbuddin Hekmatyar, leader of the Islamic Party of Afghanistan, the most powerful opposition group, told journalists today that the issue of releasing Soviet POW's is "a secondary consideration." He tried to link the resolving of this issue with agreement by Moscow to help the mujahidin remove the current Kabul government from power.

Deputy Minister Signs Agreement With DPRK

LD2112121591 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 0755 GMT 17 Dec 91

[By TASS correspondent Aleksandr Valiyev]

[Text] Pyongyang, 17 Dec (TASS)—The cultural cooperation agreement between the RSFSR and DPRK signed here today aims to develop Russian-Korean friendly ties and mutually advantageous cultural cooperation. The document was signed by RSFSR Deputy Culture Minister Valentin Rodionov and Kim Chong-ho, DPRK deputy minister of culture and art, and is valid until 1994.

The sides pledged to develop cooperation between cultural and artistic institutions, academic institutions, and scientific establishments and expressed readiness to help organize festivals, competitions, arts festivals, and other social and cultural events in the RSFSR and the DPRK.

This is the first cultural cooperation agreement between the RSFSR and the DPRK, Valentin Rodionov told a TASS correspondent. Both sides showed a high level of interest in concluding it. As one of the first steps in its implementation, we have agreed that Russian arts collectives will participate in the annual Pyongyang "April Spring" arts festival next year, he noted.

Supreme Soviet

Union Supreme Soviet Property 'Taken Over'

LD1912172191

[Editorial Report] Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian at 1521 GMT on 19 December carries a seven-minute report by reporter Andrey Nikiforov on the 19 December meeting of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet. The report focuses on the session's debate on enterprise taxation and the adoption of bills on environmental protection and the mass media.

After this report, Nikiforov notes that a news conference was held this evening at the Russian White House by Deputy Ryabov, chairman of the newly formed Liquidation Commission for the USSR Supreme Soviet.

Nikiforov states that the following question was asked: "The property of the USSR Supreme Soviet is being taken over by the Russian Supreme Soviet. Does this mean that the property of the president of the USSR is being taken over by the president of the Russian Federation?"

Nikiforov says that the answer is: "Quite correct, and the relevant decree is being drafted on this."

Deputies Recalled From Union Supreme Soviet

CM2312122491 Moscow ROSSIYSKAYA GAZETA in Russian 17 Dec 91 First Edition p 2

["Official Document": "Russian Supreme Soviet Recalls Deputies"—RIA headline]

[Text] In connection with the ratification of the agreement on the establishment of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR resolves:

1. In accordance with Point 2 of the resolution of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet of September 27, 1991 "On Cooperation Between the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR and People's Deputies of the RSFSR and People's Deputies of the USSR Representing the RSFSR in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR," to recall the deputy groups of the RSFSR from the Council of Republics and the Council of the Union of the USSR Supreme Soviet.

2. For the Presidium of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet to submit to the RSFSR Supreme Soviet proposals ensuring the realisation of the status of the people's deputy of the USSR elected on RSFSR territory.

3. To recognise as invalid resolutions of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet No. 1691-1 of September 27, 1991 "On Cooperation Between the RSFSR Supreme Soviet With People's Deputies of the USSR Representing the RSFSR in the Supreme Soviet of the USSR" and No. 1765-1 of October 18, 1991 "On Forming the Deputy Groups of the RSFSR in the Council of Republics and the Council of the Union of the USSR Supreme Soviet."

4. The resolution comes into effect the day it is adopted.

[Signed] R.I. Khasbulatov, chairman of the RSFSR Supreme Soviet.

RSFSR House of Soviets, Moscow, 13 December 1991.

Supreme Soviet Reviews Moscow Food Situation

OW2012140291 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1147 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Transmitted via KYODO]

[Text] In the morning December 20, at the request of a number of deputies, the Russian Federation's Supreme Soviet agreed to listen to a report on the situation in Moscow. The report was delivered by Mayor of Moscow, Gavriil Popov, Chairman of the MosSoviet [Moscow Soviet], Nikolay Gonchar and members of the Moscow government.

On the same day, the parliament will discuss the Russian President's decree on setting up a ministry for security and internal affairs.

Popov on Shortages, Privatization

LD2012232791

[Editorial Report] Moscow All-Union Radio First Program Radio-1 Network in Russian at 1700 GMT on 20 December broadcasts a 4-minute report by Andrey Nikiforov on a speech today by Gavriil Popov at the Russian Supreme Soviet.

Nikiforov says: "Gavriil Kharitonovich Popov divided his speech, as it were, into two parts. First, he touched on the question of food in the capital. Vegetables and potatoes—here the situation is okay. Bread, flour, groats—here the situation is more difficult, but the situation can be contained, Gavriil Popov said. Finally meat and dairy products, butter and vegetable fat, cheese and eggs. Here the situation is close to catastrophe.

"Finally, the second part of his speech concerned the adoption of a law on Moscow. The capital's mayor considers that it would be sufficient now to adopt a separate decision on Moscow for several months, to see how it is implemented, and then to adopt a law on this basis. Nonetheless, if the Russian deputies decide to adopt a law, the capital's mayor said, then substantial amendments need to be made to the draft, and these amendments have been prepared at the town hall.

"Naturally, Gavriil Popov was asked very many questions. I offer one of them, and the answer of the capital's mayor, for your attention."

An unidentified questioner asks: "Esteemed Gavriil Kharitonovich, please tell me to what extent your interrelations with the Moscow soviet and other representative bodies of authority—I mean the rayon soviets—negatively influence the resolution of the specific problems of Moscow. Please tell me what the Supreme Soviet can do today to exclude all these contradictions in the interrelations between you and the Moscow Soviet."

Popov replies: "Far be it from me to find some kind of specific enemy and to consider that if this enemy is removed then we will get meat and milk. Therefore, I can say that the difficulties and contradictions which crop up in our interrelations have a bearing on this whole process.

"In the given case it is a question, in my view, of the fact that a systematic invasion is occurring in executive functions. That is, the question of who should live in this or that house, how to specifically deal with something, and so on and so forth. This indeed creates complexities. But in the final analysis one could reconcile oneself to this also.

"What has led to the current critical situation is the problem of privatization. This is quite clear. Millions of people in Moscow have to make decisions which are vitally important for them, decisions with implications for dozens of years—privatization of housing, spending savings on buying a shop, getting into debt, taking out bank credit, and so on and so forth. It is very difficult for them to do this. None of them have ever conducted their own business, and dozens of other things. It is in precisely these conditions that it seems to me any vagueness exerts a brake on this process, creates enormous difficulties, and it is in this sphere that I see the basic problem."

After this, Nikiforov says, Nikolay Gonchar, chairman of the Moscow soviet, spoke, sharing Popov's concern over the food situation in the capital.

Legislature Blamed for 'Catastrophe'

LD2112033591 Moscow TASS in English
2353 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow December 20 TASS—The present food crisis in Moscow was brought about by the delay in privatization of trade, Gavriil Popov, the mayor of the capital, said today at a Russian Supreme Soviet meeting which examined an issue on the food situation in the city.

Popov accused the Moscow Council and the Russian parliament of the delay as the bodies representing the highest legislative power which could have rendered the capital a status of a zone of free enterprise in proper time. "By speeding up the privatization of trade we counted on private initiative to ensure sufficient food supply to the capital", the mayor stressed.

Popov characterised the provisions situation in Moscow as "close to catastrophe". He said he had made a verbal statement on his resignation to the Russian president, and intended to make a written one by the end of the month.

Moldova

President Comments on Alma-Ata Agreement

LD2212154591 Moscow TASS in English 1454 GMT 22 Dec 91

[By correspondent Fedor Angeli]

[Text] Kishinev December 22 TASS—As distinct from the former Union with its single rigid center and bulky ineffective structures, the participants of the meeting in Alma-Ata signed an exceptionally important agreement on creating a Commonwealth of really independent sovereign and equal states, President of Moldova Mircea Snegur told TASS at the airport on arriving from Alma-Ata.

It is a good beginning for fruitful and mutually beneficial cooperation among the members of the Commonwealth, and only time will show its viability, the president said.

The documents signed in Alma-Ata will make it possible to strengthen independence and territorial integrity of Moldova, Snegur pointed out.

Security Minister Hails Alma-Ata Accord

LD2212215791 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1157 GMT 22 Dec 91

[By correspondent Fedor Angeli]

[Excerpt] Kishinev, 22 Dec (TASS)—"What happened in Alma-Ata has very great and important significance for Moldova," Anatol Plugaru, the republic's minister for national security, told a TASS correspondent today. In his opinion, by signing the agreement on joining the Commonwealth of Independent States, Moldova has lost absolutely nothing and on the contrary has only gained.

The minister noted that an efficient study of public opinion in the republic shows a positive reaction among the majority of people toward the signing of the Alma-Ata documents by the Moldovan president. This act, according to him, "is the beginning of the end of the policies of the separatists of the Dnester area as well. People in various extremities of the former Union, including Moldova, have long been awaiting the adoption of these agreements. With their signing, a start has been made toward calm in the former Union, and a normal process in all spheres of life must begin." [passage omitted]

Dnestr Seeks 'Self-Dependent' Role

LD2212054191 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 0500 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] (?ANI) reports from Tiraspol that the agreement signed in Alma-Ata has greatly weakened the Dnestr Moldovan Republic's [DMR] position. The Dnestr Republic president's press center reveals that it is most possible that the DMR will insist on joining the Commonwealth in the capacity of a self-dependent [samostoyatelnoye] member.

Dnestr Republic Leader on Dubossary Events

PM2312155591 Moscow KRASNAYA ZVEZDA in Russian 19 Dec 91 First Edition p 1

[Interview with G. Marakutsa, chairman of the Dnestr Republic Supreme Soviet, by Captain 3d Rank V. Yermolin in Moscow, under the "Viewpoint" rubric; date of interview not stated: "We Are Counting on a Civilized Approach"—first two paragraphs are introduction]

[Text] Events in the Dnestr Republic [Pridnestrovye] are once again the focus of mass media attention: The skirmish on the outskirts of the city of Dubossary cost the lives of seven people, and this tight knot of conflict, which has become tighter still following the elections of presidents in Gagauzia and the Dnestr Republic, poses the threat of a new "Karabakh." Kishinev believes that Tiraspol is mainly interested in inflaming passions, and the provocation near Dubossary was needed to complicate the negotiating processes that Moldovan President Mircea Snegur has begun over the last few days in Moscow, Minsk, and Kiev.

The Dnestr Republic has its own view of the development of events in Dubossary. Today we present this side's viewpoint.

[Yermolin] Grigoriy Stepanovich, the confrontation—if we can put it like this—between the left and right banks of the Dnestr did not start yesterday, and unfortunately the casualties of the night of 12-13 December are not the first in this protracted confrontation. In your view, how many died accidentally in this fatal skirmish? Or was this outcome predetermined?

[Marakutsa] There is nothing accidental about it. This action was obviously planned. It is no accident that all this happened actually in Dubossary. The Moldavian OMON [special purpose militia detachment] and police have already been active here for some considerable time. On this occasion, having disarmed the guards' post on the bridge, they advanced to the city. They fired on another post and encountered return fire. How are we to explain this activeness by the Moldovan police? To a considerable extent, I think, the explanation lies in the stance taken by Mircea Snegur who, on becoming Moldovan president, declared his resolve to have done with "separatists in the Dnestr Republic and Gagauzia." It is known that he intends to raise before parliament the question of disbanding the local organs of power and introducing a presidential form of rule in our region. As usual, of course, the situation is further complicated by the Moldovan People's Front. Meanwhile people in the Dnestr Republic have expressed their will in the recent referendum when they answered the question "Are you in favor of independence for the Dnestr Moldovan Republic in a political and economic commonwealth with other states?" Of those who took part, 97.7 percent answered in the affirmative in the poll. This is a reaction to Kishinev's obvious leanings toward reunification with Romania. But the lands where we live have never belonged to Romania....

[Yermolin] The Moldovan mass media depict the Dnestr Republic as a bulwark of orthodox Communists and major economic managers with a partyocratic way of thinking. Do you really regard yourselves as opponents of the democratic development of society?

[Marakutsa] Of course not. But if "democracy" is used to describe harsh repression of dissent, including even arrest; the fanning of interethnic dissension; and other suchlike "values," then we are indeed against this sort of "democracy." But we had better look at the facts: Enterprises in the Dnestr Republic have been completely freed from diktat from above, economic autonomy is a reality in our region, and this has enabled us to raise average wages to 1,200 rubles per month. Foreign economic ties have been stepped up, and dozens of joint enterprises have already been established. The revival of entrepreneurial activity is obvious. In formulating the Law on Privatization, we are guided by similar Russian laws. In political terms, our democracy also does not exist in words alone. About a dozen different parties are operating in the Dnestr Republic and, of course, the Moldovan National Front has a branch too. One other fact: Tens of thousands of people have emigrated from Moldova over the last year. Quite a few of them have settled in the Dnestr Republic. Sticking labels on things is a familiar device, but in my opinion it is no longer effective; people can see for themselves who is who. Therefore the inhabitants of the Dnestr Republic are fully resolved to uphold their independence, whatever the cost may be.

[Yermolin] Do you mean that in the event of Kishinev's attempting to "regulate" its relations with you by force, the Dnestr Republic will declare total mobilization and recruit a home guard?

[Marakutsa] I repeat that people are in a resolute mood. But I hope it will not come to total mobilization. We are after all living in a civilized world. Not all opportunities for mutual understanding have yet been exhausted. As far as our defense forces are concerned, we do have a republican guard, units from the "Dnestr" battalion based on militia subunits, and workers' detachments assisting the militia (this last group are serving as voluntary people's companies, unarmed). In all, somewhere in the order of 600-700 men.

[Yermolin] But what about Soviet Army units? There have been reports in the press that the military are helping you with manpower, hardware, and weapons.

[Marakutsa] Untrue. We are trying not to drag the Army into the events that are occurring here. However, it must be borne in mind that the officers and warrant officers live among us, they see everything, their families are enduring exactly the same as our families—can we really forbid a serviceman from fearing for his home and his land? I do not know if this is possible—can you make a serviceman "not notice" the pain and worry that surrounds you? We have traditionally good relations with the 14th Army command. We have always met and always do meet the military halfway as regards decisions on daily life and other questions. And whereas the Soviet Army is spoken of as an army of occupiers on the other side of the Dnestr, inhabitants of the Dnestr Republic have always regarded the Army as a symbol of protection. This explains our attitude to it.

[Yermolin] Grigoriy Stepanovich, with the emergence of the Commonwealth of Independent States as a real entity, your position is also undergoing a qualitative change. Or am I mistaken?

[Marakutsa] We never placed any particularly great hopes on the center, which today has virtually disappeared. We did not get too much support or protection from it. We are hoping for understanding by the current founders of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Nor are we ruling out the possibility of joining the Commonwealth or becoming part of the Republic of Moldova, or, if Moldova chooses a different path, of becoming autonomous. Here in Moscow I have had several top-level meetings—both in the RSFSR Government and the RSFSR Supreme Soviet. For the time being I will say one thing—we are hopeful that all our problems will be resolved at a civilized level.

Ukraine

Armenia, Kazakhstan, Moldova Recognized

LD2112145591 Moscow TASS in English
1426 GMT 21 Dec 91

[By UKRINFORM correspondent Ivan Saiko]

[Text] Kiev December 21 (TASS)—Ukraine has recognised the independence of Kazakhstan, Armenia and Moldova and said it will base its relations with these states on principles proclaimed in the appeal to the parliamentarians and peoples of the world adopted by the Ukrainian Parliament on December 5, 1991.

Those include equality, non-interference into each other's internal affairs, territorial integrity, inviolability of state borders, and protection of human rights and freedoms, including of ethnic minorities.

A statement circulated by the Ukrainian Foreign Ministry said the ministry is ready to begin talks to establish diplomatic relations with Kazakhstan, Armenia and Moldova.

Kiev Opposes Commonwealth as 'Single State'

LD2012185291 Moscow TASS in English
1720 GMT 20 Dec 91

[By UKRINFORM correspondents Aleksandr Litvinov and Mikhail Melnik]

[Text] Kiev December 20 TASS—Ukraine is against turning the Commonwealth of Independent States into a single state with its own bodies of state authority and government.

It is against making the Commonwealth a subject of international law. The Commonwealth's coordinating bodies should not have a commanding character. Their decisions should be advisory. The Ukrainian parliament said in a statement released on the eve of the summit in Alma-Ata on December 21.

The statement was prompted by some ambivalent interpretations of separate provisions of the agreement on the Commonwealth and the agreement's general tendency by some officials of the republics which have signed the agreement.

The statement stresses that the border between Ukraine on the one hand and Russia and Belarus on the other is Ukraine's state border, which is inviolable.

Ukraine will build its own armed forces on the basis of the former Soviet Armed Forces deployed on its territory. It will seek the status of a nuclear-free state and the destruction of all nuclear arsenals under effective international supervision. Ukraine will not join any military blocs. The deployment of strategic forces on Ukrainian territory is temporary.

The Ukrainian parliament announces that the republic is establishing a free economic zone by introducing its own currency unit, establishing its own banking and customs systems and developing its own transport and communications systems. It will also participate in regional and inter-regional markets.

Ukraine pledges guarantees to honour international obligations, that devolve to it from the treaties signed by the Soviet Union, in accordance with the republic's legislation, the statement says.

Supreme Soviet Adopts Statement

LD2012141891 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 1200 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] The Ukraine's Supreme Soviet today adopted a statement on the Ukraine becoming a member of the Commonwealth of Independent States. An ambiguous interpretation, says the statement, is being made of the agreement's individual clauses, as well as in the general direction taken by the official circles of the sides that are parties to the agreement. It is even being suggested that the agreement is the basis for creating a new Union state, which is in contradiction to the independence of the Ukraine.

In this connection, the statement says, the Ukraine protests against the transformation of the Commonwealth of Independent States into a state formation, having all the bodies of power and administration. The Ukraine also protests against attributing to the Commonwealth of Independent States the status of a subject of international law. While implementing foreign policy independently, the Ukraine is only entering into consultations with other states in the Commonwealth.

The Ukraine, the statement continues, reserves the right not only to suspend but also to cease its participation in the agreement or in its individual clauses.

The statement ends by saying that its contents are the official interpretation of the Minsk agreement and are obligatory for the actions of the president of the Ukraine, the prime minister, and other structural links of executive power.

Kravchuk Seeks 'Close Contacts' With Poland

LD2012211591 Warsaw PAP in English 1934 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] Kiev, Dec. 20—Speaking about relations between the Ukraine and Poland in an extensive interview granted to PAP, President of the Ukraine Leonid Kravchuk said that his country wants possibly close contacts with Poland and that any complications in the Polish-Ukrainian past can be easily overcome today by way of friendly agreements.

Kravchuk stressed that both nations have common interests, geographical location, and problems to tackle in which the Ukraine is going to use much of Polish reforming experience. The Ukraine is not going to copy the economic programme of Poland's Leszek Balcerowicz, but Polish solutions are noticeable in the three privatization bills proposed to the Ukrainian parliament.

Commenting on the problem of the Polish-Ukrainian border, where enormously long lines are waiting on both sides to cross and various incidents abound, Kravchuk said that when both countries reach full agreement on that issue, and both ethnic minorities in both countries are given appropriate treatment, everything else will be solved quickly. He did not rule out a possibility of opening borders in the future.

Kravchuk said the recognition of the Ukraine, which Poland did first, is the first step preceding negotiations on the framework of bilateral relations and he recalled that President Lech Walesa had been invited to Kiev.

Foreign Minister Arrives in Germany for Talks

LD2112030491 Moscow TASS in English 0028 GMT 21 Dec 91

[By correspondent Lev Voinukhin]

[Text] Bonn December 20 TASS—Anatoliy Zlenko, the Ukrainian foreign minister arrived in Bonn on a visit today at the invitation of his German counterpart Hans-Dietrich Genscher. The Ukrainian delegation includes Dmitry Pavlychko, the chairman of the commission on foreign affairs of the republican Supreme Soviet and other officials.

On Saturday [21 December] the two ministers will have talks in the course of which they intend to discuss the prospects for developing the situation in the former Soviet Union in the context of forming a Commonwealth of Independent States, the problems of disarmament and bilateral relations.

During the visit which will last till Sunday [22 December], the Ukrainian minister will meet with high-ranking representatives of the German Government and the Bundestag, including Friedrich Bohl, the department head of the Federal Chancellery, and Bernd Wilz, chairman of the working group on disarmament issues of CDU/CSU [Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union], and other officials.

Meets With Genscher

LD2212000791 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1733 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] On the same day, A.M. Zlenko held lengthy talks with German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher. Genscher attached exceptional importance to the Alma-Ata meeting of the leaders of the sovereign republics and described the proclamation of the Commonwealth of Independent States as "an historic event." The inclusion of these new states in trans-Atlantic and European cooperation will, in his words, be a major contribution to international stability. We, he emphasized, must not leave these states alone to face their problems. The Western countries should show their readiness for cooperation and solidarity. "And the FRG is ready," he declared.

The ministers discussed the development of German-Ukrainian relations. An overall understanding of the need to draft a treaty of cooperation between the two states and to commence the appropriate negotiations was expressed.

Hans-Dietrich Genscher informed the Ukrainian minister of the FRG's stance regarding recognition of the Commonwealth member states. Germany, he commented, believes the EC countries should immediately decide to recognize those states that want to be recognized. Our position, he said, is that these countries recognize the principles tabulated by the EC on 16 December in Brussels. It is also essential that the independent states reaffirm the commitments resulting from the treaty signed by the Soviet Union on conventional forces in Europe. According to Genscher, it is also important that the issue of control over nuclear weapons be resolved "clearly and unambiguously." Since this issue will be examined at the next meeting of the sovereign states' leaders, scheduled for 30 December, recognition could become effective after this date, he stressed.

It was agreed the two countries will establish diplomatic relations as soon as the Federal Republic recognizes the Ukraine. Hans-Dietrich Genscher confirmed the invitation extended earlier by Chancellor Helmut Kohl to President Leonid Kravchuk to pay an official visit to the Federal Republic of Germany.

Deputy Defense Minister Views Army Creation

LD2112122691 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 0328 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow, 21 Dec (TASS)— USSR Deputy Defense Minister Boris Pyankov refutes rumors that a 1.5 million-strong army has been concentrated on the banks of the Dnepr River. He leads a group of Defense Ministry generals and officers rendering assistance to a sovereign state in the creation of its own armed forces. According to him, "a little more than 500,000 servicemen are currently deployed in the Ukraine."

In an interview in today's edition of KRASNAYA ZVEZDA, Pyankov revealed that the group has already carried out a certain "inventory" of the grouping of troops stationed in the Ukraine and has drafted their conclusions. They will be submitted to the republic's leadership. Proposals have been presented on which forces and support units should be regarded as strategic deterrence forces, as well as which troops should form the basis of the Ukraine's armed forces.

According to Boris Pyankov, he has no serious disagreement with the leadership of the Ukraine Defense Ministry. He believes that the most important thing is to ensure reliable control of troops and to organize fully effective support for them. "Certain representatives of the Ukrainian Defense Ministry want to control troops without intermediate structures," said Boris Pyankov. "In other words, they believe they can get by without military districts." In the view of the colonel-general, this is mistaken. "Such control cannot be effective if one takes into account the fairly large grouping of troops, the size of Ukrainian territory, and the large mobilization resources involved."

Draft Charter Asserts Crimea's Independence

LD2212021291 Kiev Radio Kiev in English 2200 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] The working out of the draft constitution of the Crimean autonomous republic—or the Republic of Crimea, as the authors of the draft constitution propose to call this state formation—is over. The first chapter of the constitution reads that the Crimea is the legal and democratic state owning the right to rule and govern over its territory, as well as possess all the natural resources and material, cultural, and spritual values that are on the territory of the Crimea. The draft constitution will be submitted to the discussion at the session of the Crimean autonomous republic's Supreme Soviet which will be convocated on 26 December this year.

Armenia

President Views Alma-Ata Meeting

LD2212221591 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1945 GMT 22 Dec 91

[By correspondent Tigran Liloyan]

[Text] Yerevan, 22 Dec (TASS)—"The process of Armenia becoming independent has ended; the republic has gained full independence," stated Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan in commenting on the results of the Alma-Ata meeting of heads of sovereign states. Armenian television carried an interview with him this evening which was recorded on the plane returning from the Kazakh capital.

We suggested the idea of a Commonwealth of Independent States long ago, stressed Levon Ter-Petrosyan, as a logical step in the historical process and as a counterbalance to Gorbachev's notion of renewing the Union, as stated in the draft Novo-Ogarevo treaty. It is with satisfaction that we can today note, said Ter-Petrosyan, that the political course of the Armenian authorities has been fully justified. In this sense, what has happened was fully in accordance with our plans.

The president went on to express the view that in discussing the documents signed in Alma-Ata, the Armenian parliament should voice serious observations and reservations about them "which would have legal force for the republic." This applies first and foremost to the status of Nagorno-Karabakh, an issue on which we must express our views in some way and demand reliable guarantees for its international recognition, he said. Levon Ter-Petrosyan said that another area in which there are reservations is the rebuilding program in the earthquake zone. According to him, within the framework of the Commonwealth, this work should rank with the problems of Chernobyl and the Aral Sea. I think, concluded the president, that we will manage this, as we managed to include the issue in the treaty on the economic commonwealth.

Republic Recognizes Ukrainian Independence

LD2012134891 Moscow TASS in English 1325 GMT 20 Dec 91

[By correspondent Tigran Liloyan]

[Text] Yerevan December 20 TASS—Armenia recognises the independence of Ukraine first proclaimed on August 23, 1991 and supported in a referendum this December, Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan said on Friday [20 December].

He stressed Armenia will develop friendship and longstanding ties with Ukraine to promote peace and security in their republics.

Decree Issued on Three Border Districts

LD2012230391 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1800 GMT 20 Dec 91

[By correspondent Tigran Liloyan]

[Text] Yerevan, 20 Dec (TASS)—Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan has issued a decree on the formation of border districts in the republic. As is noted in this document, which was published today, this was done with the aim of guaranteeing the reliable protection of Armenia's state border and proceeds from the declaration of the republic's independence proclaimed in August last year.

Three border districts are defined in the decree: the southwestern—along the border with Turkey, Iran, and the Nakhichevan Republic; northern—along the border with Georgia and Azerbaijan; and eastern—along the border with Azerbaijan.

Gas Pipeline Said Destroyed by Azerbaijanis

NC2112152291 Yerevan Radio Yerevan International Service in Armenian 1930 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] On 17 December an accident occurred at the 114th kilometer sector—near Azerbaijani-inhabited Shusha—of the Yevlakh-Stepanakert-Goris gas pipeline. The reasons for the accident are not known. A fire has broken out at the accident site.

The heads of the gas pipeleine departments in eight affected rayons—Gorisskiy, Kapanskiy, Megrinskiy, Sisianskiy, Vaykskiy, Yekhegnadzorskiy, and Kubatlinskiy and Zangelanskiy in Azerbaijan—have been informed about the sharp drop in gas pressure.

It has been suggested to take certain measures in places to ensure the security of the Armenian population. As of 18 December, [indistinct figure] cubic meters of gas have failed to arrive in Goris. Yesterday, the gas flow also stopped at the pipeline feeding Yekhegnadzorskiy. According to preliminary reports, the pipeline was blown up by Azerbaijanis in Lachinskiy Rayon.

Beacuse of the gas flow stoppage, bakeries and the central heating system are running on diesel fuel. If additional fuel is received, these installations might go on working for another 18-20 days. Three hundred fifty-five homes have remained totally [words indistinct], they are not attached to the central heating system.

Azerbaijan

Nagorno-Karabakh Forms Self-Defense Committee

NC2112140991 Yerevan ARMENPRES International Service in Armenian 1215 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] Yerevan, 20 Dec (ARMENPRES)—Recently, the infiltration into Nagorno-Karabakh Republic [NKR] of armed groups, in military uniform, from Azerbaijan has become more frequent. According to available information, most of the terrorist acts committed against the peaceful population are undertaken by such brigand groups.

The NKR's executive committee of the Soviet of People's Deputies has decided to consider the presence on its territory of all armed formations, with the exception of the USSR Internal Affairs Ministry's troops and the army units of the USSR Defense Ministry, as illegal with all the consequences that entails. The further presence of any armed formation in Nagorno-Karabakh without the consent of the local authorities will be considered an act of aggression against the republic.

The Self-Defense Committee of Nagorno-Karabakh [garabagi inknapashtpanutyan komite] has been set up under Leonard Petrosyan, chairman of the NKR's executive committee of the Soviet of People's Deputies. He declared that he intends to act in tandem with the office of the military commandant of the state of emergency.

Committee Declared 'Illegal'

NC2112141891 Yerevan Radio Yerevan Network in Armenian 1730 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] Commenting on the declaration by the executive committee of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic [NKR] on the formation of a NKR self-defense committee, Shahin Aliyev, deputy director of the Azerbaijani Supreme Soviet's department on legislation and protection of legality, noted that the decision is illegal because the NKR does not exist as such.

In Aliyev's opinion the idea of creating NKR was hatched by Armenia in an attempt to retain its territorial (?designs) on Azerbaijan.

Stepanakert Shelled; 15 Dead in Three Days

NC2112150891 Yerevan ARMENPRES International Service in Armenian 1215 GMT 20 December

[Text] The shelling of Stepanakert and other settlements is continuing. According to incoming reports, 15 people have died in the last three days. Karintak, the only Armenian village in Shushinskiy Rayon and surrounded on all sides by Azerbaijani villages, is relying on its own means to repulse the three-day long offensive by the Azerbaijani OMON [special purpose militia detachment].

The Azerbaijani brigand formations are fighting against Nagorno-Karabakh not only with arms. The ARMENPRES correspondent reports from Stepanakert that the flour brought to Nagorno-Karabakh in military helicopters is not reaching the population. The Stepanakert airport where the helicopters land is controlled by the Azerbaijani OMON. Also, the servicemen cannot transport the flour because of the lack of fuel.

Further on Shelling

NC2112150991 Yerevan Radio Yerevan Network in Armenian 1730 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Text] The ARMENPRES correspondent in Stepanakert reports that Stepanakert was still being shelled as of this morning. The shelling started last night with Alazan missiles and (?B-12) grenades.

Six persons were gravely injured and twenty residential buildings were damaged. The shelling was particularly fierce at the Kirkidzhan settlement.

A group of armed Azerbaijanis have launched a brigand attack on the village of Kazanchi in Mardakertskiy Rayon. Three servicemen were taken hostage, the farm was set on fire, and 50 cattle were driven away.

The village of Karintak came under fire from Shusha. Three residents were gravely injured and [word indistinct] caught fire.

Baku radio, reporting this morning on James Baker's refusal to provide humanitarian assistance to Azerbaijan, has (?blamed) the Armenian diaspora and Armenian diplomacy. It appears that the citizens of independent Azerbaijan are not carefully following the international press, which in recent days has often reported that the provision of humanitarian assistance to any republic would fundamentally depend on its human rights policy.

Nagorno-Karabakh Government Phone Line Cut

NC2112183091 Yerevan Radio Yerevan International Service in Armenian 1930 GMT 21 Dec 91

[Text] For the past two days the election campaign has been continuing in the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic. The candidates for the Supreme Soviet are presenting their election platforms to the electorate in cellars and shelters.

The republic's executive committee met on 17 December and appointed Serch Sargsyan, representative of the Armenian Pan-National Movement, as the acting deputy chairman of the executive committee.

Today, Azerbaijan has also severed Nagorno-Karabakh's last link with the outside world: It has cut off the government phone line.

Armed Groups Seize Military Weapons Dump

LD2112223591 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 2010 GMT 21 DeC 91

[By correspondent Vadim Byrkin]

[Text] Moscow, 21 Dec (TASS)—The Stepanakert commandant's office for the state of emergency has reported that Azerbaijani armed groups have taken over an arms dump belonging to the Transcaucasus Military District and containing a large amount of weaponry and ammunition. The dump is in the town of Agdam, in a part of

Azerbaijan bordering on Nagorno-Karabakh. In addition, six Soviet servicemen are still being held hostage in Agdam; the demand is that they be exchanged for six Azerbaijani militiamen seized together with a missile launcher in the Martuninskiy Rayon of Nagorno-Karabakh by USSR Interior Ministry troops. TASS asked the USSR Defense Ministry Press Center for its comments on the report and was told that, according to duty units of the Transcaucasus Military District, the district arms dump in Agdam is under the protection and control of an Armenian unit. But the situation remains complex. It was reported earlier that three servicemen, military hardware, and over 80 firearms had been seized in Agdam; the men and the equipment are now said to have been returned.

Georgia

Reportage Highlights Tbilisi Crisis Events

Rally Situation 'Escalating'

LD2112225291 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1800 GMT 21 Dec 91

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[Text] While the leaders of independent states were gathering in Alma-Ata, the situation was escalating in Tbilisi. An attempt was made last night to seize Government House. It might be stormed in the next few days. The rebel television station is calling constantly for an insurrection. The building of barricades by Gamsakhurdia supporters continues at Government House.

We got in contact by telephone with Tengiz Obloti, our correspondent in Georgia, shortly before the broadcast, and asked him to get in touch with us.

[Obloti] A rally by supporters of President Gamsakhurdia has been continuing at Government House. On the square in front of parliament, there are several dozen special purpose policemen and guards. The speakers are calling on the people to come to the defense of the lawfully elected authorities. However, the number of supporters of the president on the city streets has not been increasing.

The square outside Government House is ringed by buses and heavy trucks. Beyond the trucks, opposition protest actions are continuing to insist that its demands be met finally to sit down to specific negotiations on the issues of television, as well the freeing of the central streets of Tbilisi city of barricades.

An accord has been reached on a meeting of representatives of the government and opposition at 2300 on 21 December.

Government, Opposition Begin Talks

LD2112230691 Moscow Central Television First Program Network in Russian 1900 GMT 21 Dec 91

[From the "TV Inform" newscast]

[Text] According to reports which have been received by our telegraphic agency, the political situation has become more acute since yesterday. We contacted Tbilisi by telephone this evening. President Zviad Gamsakhurdia, answering our questions, noted that a normal demonstration of political positions is under way in the city. There are rallies in support of the president as well as rallies against the president. According to appraisals by the president himself, the overwhelming majority of those participating in the rallies are coming out on his side, up to 10,000 people. Up to 2,000 are participating on the opposition side.

Tengiz Kitovani, the leader of the national guard, has reported that the situation has become very much more acute in Georgia, and it is possible that it will become even more acute in the future. According to him, most people in Georgia support the opposition. That is the other opinion.

According to a report from Tengiz Kitovani, there are armed units of the guard supporting President Gamsakhurdia currently in the presidential palace. The Ministry of Internal Affairs, for the most part, is observing neutrality. Only special militia units of the militia are inside the building.

According to data from the IPRINDA agency, the opposition has succeeded in clearing the square in front of Government House of heavy trucks this evening. Talks between the opposition and the government have begun.

As the RUSSIAN INFORMATION AGENCY reports, the issue of Georgia joining the Commonwealth of Independent States with the rights of a founding member will be submitted for consideration by the Georgian parliament tomorrow.

The export of weapons, military hardware, property, and other material valuables from Georgia's territory has been banned. An order on this was signed today.

Radio Reports Start of Fighting

LD2212093191 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 0900 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] We are waiting impatiently for a report from Tbilisi by INPRINDA correspondent Zrab Gvalyy that civil war has begun in Georgia. At least that's what he said, although he is not completely sure. Perhaps, fortunately, he is mistaken.

At 0800 today armed clashes took place outside the Government House between government troops and the opposition. As a result, four guardsmen were killed and others were injured. There is shooting involving automatic weapons, grenade launchers, and rifles. The local radio is constantly appealing for everyone who has weapons to come to the Government House to defend the president.

Attacks on Government House Noted

LD2212094591 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 0907 GMT 22 Dec 91

["Situation Aggravated in Tbilisi"—headline]

[Text] Moscow, 22 Dec (TASS)—According to the information from the Georgian capital, shooting went on all night in the city, and it did not die down in the morning. People have been injured. There are no reports of deaths. Transportation is paralyzed in the center.

The source of the aggravated situation is the demands of the opposition: to release political prisoners, to give freedom to the mass media, to clear the city center of barricades, and to give people an opportunity to express freely their views in front of the Government House. The government demands the disarming of the opposition and on the republican radio calls on the people to protect the legally elected leadership.

As the press secretary of the Georgian president reported to Moscow by fax, armed formations under the leadership of Tengiz Kitovani attacked the Government House from two directions at 0805 today. Currently, shooting continues. According to preliminary reports, the same armed formations blockaded two underground buildings.

Violence Called 'Attempted Coup'

LD2212124891 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1145 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow, 22 Dec (TASS)—K. Chakvetadze, assistant to the Georgian president's press secretary, has faxed to TASS a kind of chronicle of today's events. Here is his material in full:

"1115 (Tbilisi time—TASS). As a result of artillery shelling, the Government House is damaged. A unit of the rebels' armed group occupied positions in Kashustskiy cathedral and is shelling the Government House from there.

"According to the preliminary data, 29 people are wounded, and 3 people killed, among them a woman.

"This morning, when unarmed citizens went to Government House to stop the rebels, the latter opened fire on them.

"It was reported by reliable sources that Tengiz Sigua, the former prime minister of the republic, announced that by 1500 his forces would storm and seize the Government House. All this is nothing if not an attempted coup d'etat.

"1245 (Tbilisi time—TASS). Shooting is continuing. According to the latest reports 50 people are wounded, two of them are in serious condition. Seven people are killed."

Garrison Troops Remain 'Neutral'

LD2212125491 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1203 GMT 22 Dec 91

[By correspondent Andrey Naryishkin]

[Text] Moscow, 22 Dec (TASS)—Units and subunits of the Tbilisi garrison are occupying a neutral position and are not interfering in the conflict on the square in front of the Government House. TASS was informed of this today at 1300 (Moscow time—TASS) by the duty officer at the headquarters of the Transcaucasus Military District, which is in the Georgian capital. According to the duty officer, the headquarters does not have any official information on the situation in the city since there has been no order to collect information about the actions of the conflicting sides.

Mayor Reportedly Captured

LD2212131191 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 1212 GMT 22 Dec 91

[IRPINDA report from Tbilisi]

[Text] According to an official report, the rebel guardsmen of Tengiz Kitovani have captured Tamaz Vashadze, the mayor of the city of Tbilisi, and Supreme Soviet deputy (?Avtandil Skhiladze). According to the latest verified reports, three people are dead and 29 injured. The authorities have appealed to the population to come to the government headquarters building, where people with identity documents will be able to acquire weapons. The television is repeating urgent appeals for blood donations for the injured. The shooting continues.

Deputy Interior Minister Wounded

LD2212130191 Moscow TASS in English 1216 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Moscow December 22 TASS—Government troops fired on oppositionists who were on their way to the Government House in Tbilisi this morning. Four people were killed on the spot.

According to unverified data, several oppositionists who were trying to remove the bodies of the dead were wounded. Fighting ensued, according to Zurab Dvali, a correspondent of the IPRINDA Independent News Agency who contacted the Ostankino TV Centre studio.

Georgian Radio reported that Deputy Interior Minister Roman Gvantsadze was wounded. The number of casualties is being verified.

Incoming reports on the situation in capital of Georgia are sometimes contradictory and incomplete. In order to ascertain the situation, a TASS correspondent tried to contact President Zviad Gamsakhurdia of Georgia through a government telephone communications channel, but to no avail.

The correspondent was able to contact an officer on duty on the Georgian Interior Ministry who did not give any information, pleading "pressure of work."

Opposition Storms Government House

LD2212155991 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1437 GMT 22 Dec 91

[By correspondent Igor Gratishvili]

[Text] Tbilisi, 22 Dec (TASS)—Street battles are continuing in the center of the Georgian capital. The opposition armed forces, supported by units of the National Guard headed by Tengiz Kitovani, are continuing their storming of the government building where Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the republic's president, has taken cover. Not only small arms but artillery is also being used. There are dead and wounded on both sides—the number has not yet been established. Ambulances are unable to carry away the casualties.

According to reliable reports, volunteer detachments loyal to the Georgian president are being urgently formed in various regions of the republic and are being dispatched to Tbilisi. The situation in the city is extremely confused, and it is not yet possible to predict how events will develop over the next few hours.

As is known, the first attempt to overthrow Gamsakhurdia by force was made by the opposition on 5 October. Two people died and several dozen were wounded then as a result of the clash.

Talks Between Sides Reported

LD2212170391 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1635 GMT 22 Dec 91

[By correspondent Albert Kochetkov]

[Text] Tbilisi, 22 Dec (TASS)—The situation is relatively quiet outside the government house where supporters and opponents of the Georgian president have been exchanging intense fire since this morning. The president's press service told a TASS correspondent over the telephone that talks have started between the official authorities and the opposition. According to information from other sources, however, if the opposition's demand for Zviad Gamsakhurdia's immediate resignation is not met, its armed detachments will resume the storming of the government house in the coming hours.

President Demands Opportunity to Leave

LD2212172191 Moscow POSTFACTUM in English 1509 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Excerpt] On December 22 at 1530, local time, Georgian opposition presented President Zviad Gamsakhurdia with an ultimatum demanding that supporters of the president leave the building of Georgia's Supreme Soviet. If not, the building will be attacked.

According to unconfirmed reports, Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia demanded that Tengiz Sigua, leader of Georgian opposition, give him and his family an opportunity to leave by air for abroad. According to the reports, Tengiz Sigua guaranteed that the demand will be satisfied.

On December 22 at 0805, local time, president's guards opened fire at the opposition's armed forces units outside the House of Government in Tbilisi. The opposition returned the guards' fire and engaged in the fight. At about 1000 the opposition drove in combat material, including armored personnel carriers, a howitzer, and an Alazan missile launcher, and opened fire on the House of Government. According to some reports 10 people were killed and more than 60 injured.

According to the reports the situation in Tbilisi at 1430 was the following: Supporters of President Gamsakhurdia and oppositional forces continue to exchange fire. There have been appeals on Georgian televisions to citizens to give their blood to help the injured in the fight. [passage omitted]

Gamsakhurdia's Arrest Denied

LD2212215691 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 2119 GMT 22 Dec 91

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[Text] According to official information reported to us late this evening at Georgia's permanent mission, the number of dead has reached 17. Talks have not begun. Gamsakhurdia has not been arrested, but he is hiding in the basement of Government House.

Storming Continues; 15 'Defenders' Die

LD2312030891 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 0200 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Text] TASS reports from Tbilisi that the armed opposition continued to storm Government House at about 0200 local time. Direct fire is being carrried out with hail guns, Alazan rocket missiles, and all types of small arms. Preliminary reports indicate that 15 defenders have perished during the Government House storming. Doctors who were evacuating the wounded from the parliament building claim that about 150 conscripts left the building before the storming began, without any obstacles, after having surrendered their weapons.

The House of Artists, across from parliament in Tbilisi, is in flames as a result of being in the center of combat actions. Preliminary reports indicate that people who have been prevented by fire from escaping to safety are in the building. Fire brigades are arriving at the scene of the incident. The resumed exchange of fire between the confronting sides is hampering their work. The opposition has proposed to Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia that he and his family leave the borders of the republic through the Black Sea port of Batumi. Television revealed tonight that Government House is surrounded by opponents of the president. Zviad Gamsakhurdia, himself, made a short statement on TV in which he said that the two-hour storming of his residence has been successfully repelled and that he has the firm intention of not giving up the position he holds.

Situation 'Extremely Tense'

LD2312084191 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 0808 GMT 23 Dec 91

[By correspondent Viktor Voronyuk]

[Text] Tbilisi, 23 Dec (TASS)—The situation in the Georgian capital remains extremely tense. Shooting and explosions on Rustaveli Avenue outside Government House continue unabated. At 0900 local time, there was automatic weapons fire inside the building itself. That is where the president of Georgia is thought to be. There were missile strikes on Government House at 0930. There are large crowds of people on the streets adjacent to the building. When they took a journalist for a saboteur, the crowd nearly tore him to pieces. The correspondent was saved when he managed to show his credentials only just in time.

Since this morning, city and inter-city telephone communications have been cut off in Tbilisi. Unidentified snipers are continuing to fire on the center of Tbilisi from the roofs of buildings.

Tengiz Sigua Gives Interview

LD2312100191 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 0935 GMT 23 Dec 91

[By correspondent Albert Kochetkov]

[Text] Tbilisi, 23 Dec (TASS)—Tengiz Sigua, former prime minister of Georgia and leader of the opposition there, this morning voiced hopes for a peaceful end to the confrontation outside Government House in an interview with a TASS correspondent. "Our demands remain the same," he said. "We want President Zviad Gamsakhurdia to resign. There was a point yesterday during talks with the other side when I thought that they were inclined to meet this demand. However, we have yet to receive a definite answer."

The leader of the opposition stressed that all the initiatives for holding talks are originating from their side. The president's team is in no hurry to use the opportunity to stop the bloodshed. "There have been no telephone calls from Government House since two o'clock this morning," said Tengiz Sigua. "The opposing sides are now relatively evenly matched," he said at the end of his short interview.

Gamsakhurdia's Family Said Evacuated

LD2312102191 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 0955 GMT 23 Dec 91

[By correspondents Viktor Voronyuk and Albert Kochetkov]

[Text] Tbilisi, 23 Dec (TASS)—Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia's aircraft last night left Tbilisi airport for an unknown destination. According to well-informed sources, the president himself is still in Government House, which for over 12 hours has been under fire from armed opposition units. It is suggested that members of Zviad Gamsakhurdia's family and his relatives or friends may have been on board the president's aircraft.

Shooting is continuing in the city. At around 1020 local time, combat vehicles carrying rocket launchers began moving toward Government House. A few minutes later they could be heard in action. Shortly after that, huge plumes of smoke could be seen rising above buildings adjacent to Government House.

Reliable sources have told a TASS correspondent that a Mi-6 civilian helicopter was hijacked from Tbilisi airport yesterday. There are two possible explanations: either it was taken to enable the president to flee or the opposition has decided to deliver air strikes against Government House.

President's Departure Denied

LD2312110591 Moscow TASS in English 1051 GMT 23 Dec 91

[By correspondent Albert Kochetkov]

[Text] Tbilisi December 23—Information about the unscheduled departure by President Zviad Gamsakhurdia from Tbilisi tonight was denied by airport authorities today. The aircraft was just moved from its usual parking lot to another place sparking rumours about Gamsakhurdia's flight, they said.

The balance of forces in the city, where fighting between the president's supporters and opposition forces continues for the second day, can shift in favour of the president, observers note.

Observers say the president's forces are likely to be reinforced by armed detachments from South Ossetia and other regions of the republic. According to unconfirmed reports, detachments from Tskhinval have already reached Tbilisi and are engaged in fighting.

It is calm outside the Government House. The House of Artists of the republic was totally burned down and a fire still rages in the building of a secondary school.

Shooting, Missile Attacks Renewed

LD2312112991 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1105 GMT 23 Dec 91

[By correspondent Albert Kochetkov]

[Text] Tbilisi, 23 Dec (TASS)—Increased shooting between the supporters and opponents of Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia renewed again today at around 1300 local time. Opposition forces are intensively firing missiles and artillery at Government House. It is impossible to establish a precise figure for the dead and wounded; all the city center's phones have been disconnected. Medical aid to the injured is being given by workers of the city's ambulance services and members of the Georgian Red Cross's rescue service at risk to their lives.

Roads Said Controlled by Opposition

OW2312124891 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1131 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Transmitted by KYODO]

[Excerpt] Fighting for the government building which houses the residence of President Zviad Gamsakhurdia and parliament was resumed in Tbilisi Monday [23 December] morning.

According to IF's [INTERFAX's] correspondent, the government building where Z. Gamsakhurdia, his wife and two children are now came under fire last night, between 2 and 3 a.m. The armed opposition used artillery too. As a result the right-hand side of the building was destroyed. The number of those killed or wounded last night and this morning is unknown.

As IF has learned from Georgia's health ministry, on Sunday [22 December] 16 people were killed and some 160 wounded. The building's defenders sustained greater casualties, reportedly 14.

TV and radio in Tbilisi are not functioning. In the city's center telephone communication is switched off.

Soviet army units refrained from interfering. They decided to be totally neutral.

In the meantime some sources in Tbilisi report that police units joined by Tengiz Kitovani's guardsmen who refuse to obey Georgia's President established control over roads leading to the capital. They stop the President's armed supporters seeking to reach Tbilisi and disarm them. According to other sources, roads are controlled by militants from another opposition grouping, the Merab Kostava Society, whose leader is Georgian MP [member of parliament] Vazha Adamia. [passage omitted]

Aviation Ministry Closes Airport

LD2312140891 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1353 GMT 23 Dec 91

[By correspondent Nikita Marunov]

[Text] Moscow, 23 Dec (TASS)—The central control of the Ministry of Civil Aviation has reported today that Tbilisi airport has been closed. Three planes were dispatched only this morning—two to Moscow and one to Tashkent.

Usually more than 20 flights from Georgia's capital are carried out to many cities on the central timetable alone, not counting the flights on local air routes. The air traffic control service of Tbilisi airport considers the area dangerous for aircraft.

Tbilisi Fighting Spills Over Into S. Ossetia

LD2212113691 Moscow All-Union Radio Mayak Network in Russian 1100 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] The critical situation in Tbilisi has caused a new outburst of violence in South Ossetia. On remote approaches to Tskhinvali—excuse me to Tskhinval, this is the new name of the city—and in Znaurskiy Rayon, fighters from neighboring Georgian villages fired at housing areas and populated settlements. There are dead and seriously wounded among the peaceful population. The detachments of the Ossetian self-defense guards returned fire in an attempt to destroy fighters' weapon emplacements. The economic, transportation, and power supply blockade of Tskhinval has considerably deteriorated. The concentration of armed formations around the city is not decreasing.

The Supreme Soviet of the Ossetian Republic sent an appeal to the parliaments of the independent states of the former union in which they are asked to raise their voice to defend human dignity and the rights of ethnic minorities, to apply sever economic sanctions to the republic of Georgia, and to demand that its leadership cease the war against South Ossetia.

General Mobilization Ordered

LD2312105491 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1020 GMT 23 Dec 91

[By correspondent Valeriy Shanayev]

[Text] Vladikavkaz, 23 Dec (TASS)—According to reports from the press center of the South Ossetia information committee, residential areas, important installations of the national economy, and population centers came under artillery fire for four hours last night in the crisis areas of the distant approaches to Tskhinval (as the town is now called) and Znaurskiy Rayon. Severe damage has been caused in northern and southern districts of Tskhinval. Internal troops' check points, barracks, and the helicopter regiment have also come under fire.

Units of the Ossetian guard and self-defense detachments returned fire on areas from which the other side was shooting. Reliable sources confirm that armed units are constantly moving in along the approaches to Tskhinval. They are equipped with fire arms, grenade launchers, armored equipment, missile launchers, and artillery guns.

The Committee for Self-Defense, which was set up by decision of the Supreme Soviet of the South Ossetian Republic, has declared a general mobilization of citizens aged between 16 and 60. Citizens in that age range who have left South Ossetia for North Ossetia and other parts of the country are ordered to report to Tskhinval immediately for registration.

Kazakhstan

Alma-Ata Recognizes Republics' Independence

LD2012190191 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1734 GMT 20 Dec 91

[By KAZTAG correspondent Gennadiy Kulagin]

[Text] Alma-Ata, 20 Dec (TASS)—Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev today signed decrees recognizing the state independence of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Belarus, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, the Ukraine, and Estonia.

These decrees also instruct the republic's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to hold talks with them and sign agreements on establishing bilateral relations between Kazakhstan and each of the independent states.

Republic Signs Trade Agreement With China

LD2212174191 Moscow TASS International Service in Russian 1352 GMT 22 Dec 91

[By correspondent Vladimir Kashirov]

[Text] Beijing, 22 Dec (TASS)—The governments of the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Kazakhstan have concluded a trade and economic agreement with the aim of developing trade and economic relations between the two countries on the basis of friendship, cooperation, equality, and mutual advantage. This is the first agreement signed after the Alma-Ata meeting and concluded with the PRC by the independent Kazakh state.

A document containing 12 articles on the basic directions of the development of trade relations and economic cooperation between the two countries was signed this evening in Beijing by S. Zh. Abishev, Kazakh minister of foreign economic relations, and Li Lanqing, minister of foreign economic relations and foreign trade of the PRC.

The agreement, valid from the day of its signing, is compiled in duplicate in Kazakh, Russian, and Chinese. It is valid for five years and will be automatically extended for one year, unless one of the contracting parties informs the other party in writing six months before the expiry date of its desire to discontinue the agreement.

On the basis of the agreement, Kazakhstan and China will grant each other the status of most favored partner in foreign trade, will create favorable conditions for investment in the economies of the two countries, and will provide assistance to their firms and enterprises with regard to the development of multilateral economic cooperation.

After the signing of the agreement, S. Zh. Abishev and Li Lanqing expressed mutual confidence in the further successful evolution of Kazakh-Chinese trade and economic relations in a conversation with Soviet journalists.

"The PRC and Kazakhstan," the Chinese minister said, "are close neighbors, maintaining traditional friendly relations and good business cooperation with each other. An important distinctive feature of the trade and economic relations of our two states is their mutually complementary nature in the economic field. I regard the prospects for the evolution of trade and economic cooperation with Kazakhstan and other republics with enthusiasm."

Members of the Kazakh delegation, which arrived in Beijing on 21 December, told a TASS correspondent that Kazakhstan and China have agreed on opening trade missions in Beijing and Alma-Ata.

Food Imports From China Increase

LD2012155291 Alma-Ata Kazakh Radio Network in Kazakh 1050 GMT 18 Dec 91

[Summary] There has recently been an increase in the shipment of foodstuffs bought from various firms in China coming through Semirechye and other regions of Kazakhstan. During November and December, 14,000 tonnes of sugar were delivered, helping to somewhat ease the acute shortage. Cattle are being imported on a barter basis. Trade with China is expanding, with Kazakhstan exporting mineral fertilizers, raw materials for the metallurgy industry, and other goods.

President Names New Foreign Minister

LD2112135691 Alma-Ata Kazakh Radio Network in Kazakh 0100 GMt 21 Dec 91

[Text] By decree of the president of Kazakhstan, Tolevtay Iskhah-ulu Suleymenov has been appointed minister of foreign affairs. By decree of the president of Kazakhstan, Akmaral Arystanbekova has been released from her duties as minister of foreign affairs in connection with her transfer to another job.

Turkmenia

Leader Only To Sign Agreement as Co-Founder

OW2012174391 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1440 GMT 20 Dec 91

[Transmitted by KYODO]

[Text] President Saparmurad Niyazov of Turkmenistan is not going to sign any agreement on the forming of a Eurasian community of independent states in any other capacity than as one of its equal co-founders. Our correspondent has received this information in the President's press service today before President Niyazov left for Alma-Ata, where the leaders of the sovereign republics will be having a meeting tomorrow (December 21).

According to some trustorthy sources, President Niyazov is also planning to take up "several economic issues" with the leaders of the republics.